GRAPEVINE
VISITACION·VALLEY

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Work Party Makes Progress at "Little Vis" Garden

by Katherine Williams

Thirty parents, students, teachers, staff and volunteers gathered on Dec. 8 at Visitacion Valley Elementary School (VVES) to participate in the first work day to restart a garden site at the school.

Led by local resident Tara Hui, and volunteers Brett Stephens and Casey Allen from SF Landscapes (sflandscapes.com), workers hauled dirt, rebuilt planter boxes and pulled weeds.

"That was a lot of fun and will be a wonderful garden for the kids," said Edie Epps after volunteering for the morning.

The garden will be an opportunity for "Little Vis" teachers to share the wonder of gardening with students and have a place to demonstrate plant life cycles and other outdoor experiences. The garden will include flowers, as well as vegetables, compost piles, and an outdoor classroom.

A special thanks goes to Broadmoor Lumber (http://www.broadmoorlumber.com) for donating soil and Darryl Stephens of Spryscapes Construction (http://www.spryscapes.com) for donating use of a truck to haul the soil for the day.

Although the workers accomplished a lot, there is still more to do. Look for announcements about the next workday in mid-January.

The garden is also in need of supplies, with a wish list including: tools, lumber, seeds, vegetable starts, bulbs, vines and wine barrels. Also, trucks and volunteer labor are needed periodically, so if you have a truck please let them know.

Valley gardeners (above) who made the day a success. It was also quite helpful to have a big truck on hand (right).

Please contact Tara at tarahui@hotmail.com or (415) 467-7691 to make a donation and join the yahoo group — http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VVESGarden/ — to be updated on what is happening with the garden and future workdays.

Mayor Unveils New City Carbon Offsets to Fight Global Warming

Building on his recent proposals for a local carbon tax, solar rebate and loan programs, a grease recycling initiative, and a landmark green building ordinance, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom on Dec. 18 announced the creation of the San Francisco Carbon Fund.

This is a first-ever city-based carbon offset program that funds only local green activities. Carbon offsetting is the act of mitigating or "offsetting" greenhouse gas emissions.

"Our carbon offset program will achieve meaningful, measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions," said Mayor Newsom. "It is the first effort of its kind, where you can buy carbon offsets for projects that take place in San Francisco, that directly benefit San Francisco."

Other offset programs fund projects in far away locations, and it is frequently difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of these efforts. San Francisco now becomes the first city to pursue in-city carbon offsets to meet local carbon reduction goals.

Rather than funding replanting tree farms in other hemispheres or investing in alternative power systems on the other side of the planet, Newsom said the San Francisco Carbon Fund would support energy efficiency projects and solar panel installations for low-income housing, as well as biodiesel conversion programs that support the conversion of waste into fuel.

"Globally, the market for carbon offsets is growing rapidly, estimated to top $10 billion by 2010, and there is absolutely no regulation," said Jared Blumenfeld, director of San Francisco's Environment Department. "However, by developing our own program and funding local projects, we have the ability to assure that the offsets actually happen, benefit the local community, and help achieve our aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals."

The San Francisco Carbon Fund will begin as a pilot program to offset emissions from municipal air travel, and will be expanded to San Francisco residents, businesses and visitors once the program infrastructure has been established.

The fund will also provide City government, residents and businesses information regarding the true costs of carbon intensive activities, which are likely to be much higher than nominal amounts charged by several current offset programs. When the program is rolled out citywide, the Department of the Environment will issue an RFP for local greenhouse gas reduction projects that can be covered by the fund.

On Dec. 19, when Mayor Newsom issued an executive directive to create the new program, he said:

"Scientific evidence indicates that the risks of global warming are so dire that aggressive and immediate action is needed to reduce carbon emissions globally.

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$82 Million for Hunters Point Clean Up

Mayor Gavin Newsom recently announced that the federal government has agreed to spend over $82 million on the cleanup of the Hunters Point Shipyard in the upcoming fiscal year.

"This is a huge victory for San Francisco in general and the Bayview Hunters Point Community in particular," said Mayor Newsom. "With these funds in hand, the City will be able to continue moving forward with its plans to transform the long-shuttered Shipyard from a environmental blight on the community into a world-class location providing waterfront parks, thousands of jobs, affordable housing and a major clean technology campus."

Mayor Newsom, who made several trips to Washington D.C. in the past year to persuade federal officials that the cleanup of the Shipyard should be a major priority for the federal delegation, praised the work of Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Dianne Feinstein in securing the cleanup money for the Shipyard.

"At a time when the Department of Defense is spending less and less money every year cleaning up closed, toxic military bases, this level of funding is truly remarkable," said Newsom. "It is a testament to the strong leadership and commitment of Speaker Pelosi and Senator Feinstein to get the Shipyard cleaned up on time and in a manner that will allow us to implement the community's vision for revitalizing the City's southeastern waterfront."

The federal funds will be used to prepare over 100 acres of land at the Shipyard for transfer to the City at no cost, including land slated for new housing, parks and approximately 25 acres for a potential site for a new stadium for the San Francisco 49ers.

S.F. Proposes Largest Urban Solar Incentive Program in U.S.

In an effort to accelerate the pace of solar installation in San Francisco, Mayor Gavin Newsom, Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting and the San Francisco Solar Task Force on Dec. 11 announced a package of proposals that will provide direct financial incentives as well as a long-term loans and rebates to homeowners and businesses who install solar power.

The Solar Incentive (Rebate) Program is an ordinance that makes available $2 to 5 million per year over ten years for solar incentive payments. The Solar Loan Program is a ballot measure that creates a loan program that homeowners can use to finance the remainder of their solar installations after state and local rebates.

"San Francisco is a national leader in the development of renewable energy on city buildings," said Mayor Newsom. "Providing incentives and loans directly to consumers makes it both easy and cost-effective for residents and businesses to go solar."

"I believe our bold solar incentive and loan programs will eventually help put solar on every rooftop in the City," said Ting.

The financial incentive program addresses one obstacle to going solar for homeowners and businesses – cost. The average residential solar rooftop installation in San Francisco costs approximately $20,000. The proposed local incentive payment — $3,000 to $5,000 for residential properties, and up to $10,000 for commercial properties — along with state and federal rebates, would help cut the total cost to the customer almost in half.

This direct incentive model is based on the successful state program in California that has doubled the number of rooftop solar energy systems to 32,000 in just two years.

In addition to proposing a financial incentive, the Mayor's Office teamed with Ting to initiate the creation of the city's first low-interest renewable energy loan program for solar customers.

The city-backed, below-market-rate loans would be paid back to the city in the form of a monthly tax assessment added to the property owner's annual property tax bill.

he program will be created via a voter-approved ballot measure to repurpose $50 million in general obligation bonds originally designed for the *Seismic Safety Loan Program* to a solar and other renewable energy loan program.

The Solar Task Force, co-chaired by Ting and David Hochschild, a San Francisco Public Utilities Commissioner, is a coalition representing labor, environmental, the solar industry, and business organizations as well as local and state government.

"The solar incentive and loan programs will not only make San Francisco the solar capitol of the U.S., they will create hundreds of new green collar jobs for the local economy," said Hochschild.

The financial incentive program would be administered through SFPUC using revenue from the sale of Hetch Hetchy power in the SFPUC's public utility enterprise. It is a multi-year source of non-General Fund revenue which has traditionally been used to advance alternative energy generation, as well as energy efficiency and conservation.

Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond

As part of the City of San Francisco's 10-Year Capital Plan, the Recreation and Park Department and the Port of San Francisco have worked together to prepare a parks and open space general obligation capital bond for the Feb. 5, 2008 ballot to address the significant capital needs of the City's open space system.

In planning for the bond, over the last year the Recreation & Park Department has developed an inventory of the system's physical needs.

This allowed for the systematic evaluation of the capital needs in over 200 parks, currently estimated to be approximately $1.7 Billion).

The Department engaged in a major stakeholder outreach process throughout 2007 around our overall capital needs, identifying priorities and developing criteria used to determine the bond proposal, including project and program selection.

The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to place The Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond on the next ballot.

Plenty of Positives for Visitacion Valley During 2007

Among the many interesting occurences in Visitacion Valley over the past year:

*A piece of San Francisco railroad history is being preserved as volunteers continue restoration of State Belt Railroad Number 4, the only surviving steam locamotive left from the Port of San Francisco. More than $50,000 and eight years of restoration work had already done into the 118,000 pound engine, originally built and put into service in July 1911.

*San Francisco Recycling and Disposal's Artist in Residence Program held a closing reception for local artists, a culmination of a four-month residency in which art was made from San Francisco's discards.

*Mayor Gavin Newsom and Supervisor Sophie Maxwell welcomed passengers on the first T-Third train at the Kirkwood Station in the Bayview at 9 a.m. on Jan. 13.

*Two days later on Feb. 15 just before 12 noon, a special two-car Freedom Train left the Sunnydale Avenue station, transporting dozens of Visitacion Valley and Bayview Hunters Point residents along the new route to join thousands in celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day at the Civic Center Plaza. A special commemorative ticket issued to passengers proclaimed, "A day on ... not a day off!"

*San Francisco College Access Center had a free workshop with a comprehensive overview of the Free Application For Student Aid and information about grants and scholarships at Burton High School on Feb. 6.

*The Department of Public Works (DPW) focused cleanup along commercial blocks of Leland Avenue and portions of Bayshore Boulevard with their *green machines*.

*A festive week of Mar. 11 through 17 saw Visitacion Valley Community Center (VVCC) celebrating its 89th anniversary and what would have been the 118th birthday of its founder, Miss Florence Friedman.

*City officials and community leaders were joined by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Supervisor Sophie Maxwell and Mayor Gavin Newsom on Apr. 14 for a ribbon-cutting to commemorate the new $648 million light rail line, which involved construction of 5.1 miles of track and 18 stations along the Third Street corridor while encompassing Visitacion Valley, Bayview Hunters Point, Potrero Hill/Dogpatch, and Mission Bay. The T-Third runs from Sunnydale Avenue to Castro Station, serving as a vital link connecting the growing communities along Third Street and Bayshore Boulevard to the rest of the City.

Muni's new T-Third light rail line began regular weekday service on Apr. 7.

*After 67 years of service, the 15-Third bus line was discontinued on April 7. Buses had replaced the original 15 streetcar line in 1940 which began more than a century ago as a horsecar line. The 15-Third route was replaced at the northern and southern ends by an expanded service on the 9X, 9AX, and 9BX bus lines, as well as the T-Third.

*In February, a busload of Visitacion Valley Middle School (VVMS) students visited the State Capitol, compliments of the community policing component of the Visitacion Valley Weed and Seed grant.

*Local merchants participated in the 2007 Leland Avenue Sidewalk Sale on May 5.

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Grapevine Mailbox

Praise for Harkness Garden

My family moved to Harkness Avenue in 1968. For years, I would look across the street at the weeds growing in a blighted empty lot at the end of Bishop Street and Harkness Avenue. I would think to myself, "I wish someone would plant flowers or something over there." Once I even wrote a letter and sent pictures to the DPW and asked if they could plant ground cover or something over there. They stated they did not have the manpower, but a work crew would come (what seemed like every leap year0 to cut the weeds. Every spring, the weeds would grow right back.

About three years ago, I was driving down Rutland Street and I saw a lady working in the Community Garden on the comer of Campbell Avenue and Rutland. I wanted to stop but told myself, "She probably can't do anything." I drove on about two blocks and thought, "What the heck, it won't hurt to ask." The lady working in the garden was Fran Martin. I told her about the empty lot and asked if she knew how I could get something planted there. She promised to take a look at it and cal me. Well, she kept her promise and the rest is history.

I organized a community planting event last April where all my neighbors and the Green Stewards from the Greenway came out to help with the initial planting.

One of the Valley's newest gardens is at Harness Avenue and Bishop Street.

Thanks to Fran, the Visitacion Valley Community Center and San Francisco Beautiful, there is now a lovely little community Garden at Harkness and Bishop.

My husband waters the plants, and I am a very happy gardener who spends a lot of time there trying to keep the lot looking beautiful.

Augustene Phillips

How to Stay Young

1. Try everything twice.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down. (keep this in mind if you are one of those grouches)
3. Keep learning: Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain get idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." And the devil's name is Alzheimer's!
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots and lots of time with him or her.
6. The tears happen: Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Live while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love: Whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county, to a foreign country, but not to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity. I love you, my special friend.
11. Forgive now those who made you cry. You might not get a second time.

Know the Deal on Extended Warranties and Service Contracts

A new Better Business Bureau (BBB) national survey conducted by market research firm Kelton Research finds that more than four in ten (42 percent) Americans admit they do not look at extended warranty policies that come with their purchase. Further, nearly half (46 percent) of the consumers surveyed do not read service contracts either.

Extended warranties and service contracts are popular with the American public. According to Warranty Week, an online industry newsletter, consumers are expected to purchase approximately $1.6 billion of extended warranties and service contracts on PCs, consumer electronics and major appliances this holiday season.

Extended warranties and service contracts for electronics and other products mean big money for retailers. Generally, the profit margin on such products is slim, perhaps only a few percentage points – but the margin can be 50 to 60 percent or more on extended warranties. In fact, the margins are so good that analysts estimate in 2003 warranties accounted for most of Circuit City's operating income and almost half of Best Buy's operating income.

"There's an on-going debate about whether extended warranties and service contracts are worth the up-front cost," said Steve Cole, president and CEO, Council of Better Business Bureaus. "The bottom line is that consumers need to make sure they completely understand the terms and weigh the value of purchasing an extended warranty or service contract versus the potential need for repair or replacement over time."

In order to help make sure you get the most out of the deal, BBB offers advice to help you confidently decide whether or not you need to purchase an extended warranty or service contract when buying some of your holiday gifts:

**Extended Warranty vs. Service Contract: What's the Difference?:* Salespeople will often use the terms extended warranty and service contract interchangeably, but there is a distinction. An extended warranty is typically designed to protect you against any manufacturing defects beyond the life of the manufacturer's express warranty. A service contract, however, provides varying degrees of maintenance and upkeep as defined in the contract. An extended warranty offers protection if your computer inexplicably goes on the fritz; a service contract might protect you if you spill coffee all over your keyboard, but, then again, it might not. This is why it's always important to…

**Read the Fine Print:* As with any contract, you want to read the fine print of both the manufacturer's express warranty and the extended policy. Usually you can even take the policy home to read it closely and sleep on the decision – and many extended warranties and service contracts don't have to be purchased at the point of sale and can be purchased at a later date up to a specified period of time.

**Know What You're Really Getting:* Make sure you don't duplicate coverage. Some protection may already be in-place for a specified period of time under what is known as "implied warranty" depending on state laws. Also, if you pay with a credit card, you may be eligible for an extended warranty through your credit card company that might be sufficient.

**Shop Around:* Different retailers will offer different policies, so if buying an extended warranty or service contract is important to you, visit several retailers and find out which offers the best value.

**Consider the Cost of the Product:* When considering an extended warranty or service plan, it's important to consider the cost ratio of the policy and the product. It isn't really worth it to pay $50.00 for a policy to cover a $120 DVD player. You should also consider and calculate what it would cost for average repairs over the specified time period of the contract and compare it to the total cost of the service contract. If the product has a good track record for reliability, then the service contract could end up costing more money.

**Bottom Line: Are They Worth It?:* Considering how policies can vary, only you can decide if an extended warranty or service contract is worth the cost. Granted, extended warranties and service contracts are big money-makers for a retailer, which means that most consumers don't cash in on the coverage. Consumer Reports found that with a few products, such as computers and plasma TVs, extended warranties are a good safety net and the extra coverage can provide you with peace of mind.

For more advice you can trust to help make your holiday shopping experience as merry as possible, go to www.us.bbb.org

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Bank on San Francisco: Building a Better Financial Future for Everyone

by Mayor Gavin Newsom

Every day, thousands of San Franciscans are losing their hard-earned money simply because they do not have a bank account. An estimated 50,000 San Francisco households are "unbanked," meaning they get by without a checking or savings account. Among African Americans and Latinos, approximately one in two adults has no bank account. Without access to mainstream financial services, unbanked San Franciscans are forced to turn to expensive check cashers, spending hundreds of dollars a year to cash checks and pay bills. Estimates suggest unbanked families spend an average of 5 percent of their net income just to manage their basic finances.

A bank account is the first step on the road to financial security, and provides the necessary tools to climb the economic ladder and start saving for the future. With no safe way to access and save money, unbanked San Franciscans are also particularly vulnerable in times of crisis or emergency and could lose everything in the event of an earthquake or fire. As Mayor, I want to see San Francisco families keep all of the money they earn so they have more to spend on basic necessities like groceries, clothing and utilities and can start saving money and building assets.

I am proud to say that San Francisco is the first city in America to address the problems faced by the unbanked. I have been working closely with Treasurer José Cisneros as he leads our city's efforts to move all San Franciscans into the financial mainstream. We began by challenging every financial institution in San Francisco to partner with the City to create Bank on San Francisco, an initiative that would:

*Change bank products and policies to increase the supply of starter account options for this market.

*Raise awareness among consumers about the benefits of account ownership.

*Provide quality financial education to San Franciscans.

Unbanked San Franciscans are concerned about the cost of having a bank account and are worried they may be denied an account because they have made financial mistakes in the past. Others believe that without a social security card they are not eligible for an account. Some think they do not make enough money to have a bank account, or are intimidated by a traditional banking environment. To directly address these concerns, all of the banks and credit unions participating in the program have agreed to the following baseline criteria:

*Offer a low- or no-cost product with no minimum balance requirement. The high minimum balances and fees of many accounts is a key factor keeping people out of the financial mainstream.

*Adapt internal systems to allow customers with a poor banking history to open "second chance" checking accounts.

*Accept the Mexican Matricula and Guatemalan Consular identification cards as primary ID. For many immigrants, the barrier to opening an account is having the proper documentation.

*Expand marketing and outreach strategies in targeted, low-income neighborhoods, and increase the visibility of appropriate products in San Francisco.

*Provide financial management training in the community and partner with local community based organizations to transition customers ready to enter the financial mainstream.

Last month, Treasurer Cisneros announced the first year results of the program. Participating banks and credit unions report they have opened 11,110 Bank on San Francisco accounts since the program launched in September 2006 – far exceeding the original goal of 10,000 accounts in two-years.

With an average monthly account balance of $793.47, Bank on San Francisco is proving that with the right mix of products and outreach the unbanked can succeed in the financial mainstream. In light of this success, the goal has been raised to 20,000 accounts by October 2008. The program is run in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, local non-profit EARN and 15 partner financial institutions, representing more than 170 participating branch locations citywide.

Bank on San Francisco is an unprecedented attempt to address a serious, yet solvable social problem. Through an innovative partnership that draws on the strengths of government agencies, for-profit banks and credit unions, and a wide range of community partners, Bank on San Francisco is the first comprehensive program in the nation to address the needs of the unbanked and set thousands of families on the road to financial security.

For more information about Bank on San Francisco, or to find a participating bank or credit union in your neighborhood call 2-1-1, or visit www.bankonsf.org.

Mayor Proposes Way to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Building on his recent proposals for a local carbon tax, solar rebate and loan programs, and a grease recycling initiative, Mayor Newsom on Dec. 12 proposed a ground-breaking green building ordinance that imposes strict new green building requirements on newly constructed residential and commercial buildings, and renovations to existing buildings.

The ordinance specifically requires newly constructed commercial buildings over 5,000 sq ft, residential buildings over 75 feet in height, and renovations on buildings over 25,000 sq ft to be subject to an unprecedented level of LEED and green building certifications, which if approved, would make San Francisco the city with the most stringent green building requirements in the nation.

"We've got to stop playing within the margins and get serious about addressing our reliance on fossil fuels," said Mayor Newsom. "A lot of people don't realize that their homes and businesses also create a major carbon footprint, so today, by proposing these strict green building standards for our city, we're saying enough is enough. It's time to tackle global warming and climate change on all fronts."

The City's Climate Action Plan found that energy use in buildings and facilities is responsible for approximately 50 percent of San Francisco's greenhouse gas emissions. In 1990, San Francisco's energy use resulted in a total of approximately 4.5 million tons of CO2 emissions released into the atmosphere, making green building a critical component in the fight against climate change.

Some of the significant cumulative benefits this ordinance is expected to achieve through 2012 are: reducing CO2 emissions by 60,000 tons, saving 220,000 megawatt hours of power, saving 100 million gallons of drinking water, reducing waste and storm water by 90 million gallons of water, reducing construction and demolition waste by 700 million pounds, increasing the valuations of recycled materials by $200 million, reducing automobile trips by 540,000, and increasing green power generation by 37,000 megawatt hours.

This ordinance also continues San Francisco's efforts to reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions to 20 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2012, a goal established by the City's 2004 Climate Action Plan. In addition, by reducing San Francisco's emissions, this ordinance also furthers the State's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions statewide as mandated by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.

In 2007, Mayor Gavin Newsom established a Task Force on Green Buildings for the City comprised of ten members from San Francisco's ownership, developer, financial, architectural, engineering, and construction community.

The mission of the Task Force was to advise and recommend to the City's policy makers mandates, incentives, education, and outreach in order to increase the number and improve the quality of green buildings in San Francisco, and to assess the impacts of the Task Force's recommendations.

The Task Force issued its Report and recommendations in June 2007. This legislation is based upon the Task Force's recommendations.

Mayor Announces Expansion of Healthy San Francisco

Mayor Gavin Newsom announced that as of Jan. 2, San Francisco residents with annual incomes at or below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level will be eligible to enroll in the Healthy San Francisco program. Healthy San Francisco is a program that provides accessible and affordable health care services to uninsured San Francisco residents.

"While the debate continues to rage at the state and national levels about how to provide comprehensive health care to those who need it, San Francisco is forging ahead with our universal access plan, making health care a reality not simply for the most vulnerable populations but also for everyday, working San Franciscans," said Mayor Newsom. "Healthy San Francisco confirms that localities can play a vital role in fixing our broken health care delivery system."

Three hundred percent of Federal Poverty Level is calculated as one person's annual income at $30,630 and a family of four at $61,950. Since its start in July 2007, 6,500 residents have been enrolled in the program at 100 percent of Federal Poverty Level. Through Healthy San Francisco, enrolled residents have access to primary care and preventive services at 27 participating public and non-profit health centers. In addition, participants have access to specialty, pharmacy and hospital care.

Healthy San Francisco offers universal health access for all city residents, regardless of a person's employment status, immigration status, or pre-existing medical condition. In order to effectively and efficiently enroll San Francisco's uninsured residents into the program, Healthy San Francisco enrollment is being phased in over an 18-24 month period.

Healthy San Francisco is administered by the San Francisco Department of Public Health in partnership with the San Francisco Health Plan. More information on the program is available at www.healthysanfrancisco.org or by calling 3-1-1.

California's Big Recycling Increase a Boon to Environment

SACRAMENTO - An increase in the refund available for empty beverage containers prompted Californians to achieve a significant jump in recycling in the first half of 2007. In the process, they also created a substantial environmental benefit, according to a new report just released by the state Department of Conservation.

"I applaud Californians for increasing their recycling over the past year and helping California lead the way toward a healthier environment," said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who signed legislation last fall to increase California Refund Value on beverage containers. "Recycling is something each of us can do every day to reduce our impact on the environment."

The Six-Month Report of Beverage Container Recycling & Significant Carbon Reductions shows California's beverage container recycling rate rose six percentage points, to 71 percent, from January-June 2007. By recycling billions of aluminum cans, glass and plastic bottles during that time, Californians decreased greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 230,000 passenger cars from the roadways for a year.

To determine the amount of greenhouse gas emission reductions achieved through recycling beverage containers, the DOC used the Waste Reduction Model developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Emission calculations were based on the total volume of aluminum, glass and plastic beverage containers recycled in California.

According to the EPA, products manufactured from recycled material require less energy than using virgin resources, and lower energy consumption results in fewer greenhouse gas emissions, which are considered the primary cause of climate change. The DOC compared the recycling rate of the first six months of 2006 and the first six months of 2007 to determine the beverage container recycling rate change.

"With environmental concerns a hot topic, it's good to know every individual can make a difference one bottle or can at a time by recycling," DOC Director Bridgett Luther said. "Governor Schwarzenegger recognized this when he signed legislation to increase California Refund Value on beverage containers, and Californians responded by recycling an additional 800 million containers in the first six months of 2007. Whether people take their empties to a recycling center for a refund, put them in a curbside recycling bin, or remember to recycle when they're at work or out and about, the environment wins."

Each year, the report says, California consumes 657 million barrels of oil and emits 492 million metric tons of greenhouse gas. By recycling nearly seven billion beverage containers from January-June, Californians saved the equivalent of 2.5 million barrels of oil, and reduced emissions equivalent to 293,000 metric tons of carbon related to greenhouse gas.

To find nearby recycling centers, consumers can visit www.bottlesandcans.com and enter their zip code, or call the Department of Conservation toll-free hotline, 1-800-RECYCLE.

The increase in California Refund Value took effect on Jan. 1, 2007, and raised the refund consumers receive for each CRV beverage container from four cents to a nickel for containers less than 24 ounces and eight cents to a dime for containers 24 ounces and larger. Assembly Bill 3056 also provided funding for a statewide marketing campaign to educate Californians about CRV and to promote recycling awareness and participation.

Most beverages packaged in glass, aluminum and plastic, such as soft drinks, water, beer, sports drinks, juices and coffee and tea drinks, are included in the CRV program. Notable exceptions are milk, wine and distilled spirits. All aspects of the state's beverage container recycling program are paid for with unclaimed refunds of CRV beverage containers, at no cost to the state's general fund.

In addition to promoting beverage container recycling, the Department of Conservation maps and studies earthquakes and other geologic phenomena; classifies areas containing mineral deposits; ensures reclamation of land used for mining; regulates oil, gas and geothermal wells; and administers agricultural and open-space land conservation programs. See http://www.conservation.ca.gov/ for more information about DOC programs,

How Not to Become a Victim of Debt Elimination Scams

When it comes to eliminating debt, it could pay to follow some expert advice.

Analysts say to watch out for schemes that promise to eliminate debt at a tiny fraction of what is actually owed. The plans generally don't work and could end up hurting you more than they help.

"Over the last year, we've seen thousands of letters from debt elimination fraudsters who have charged consumers from $400 to $7,000 for worthless advice," said the Comptroller of the Currency John C. Dugan. "In the end, consumers still owe on their debts and have lost the money paid to the fraudsters. They may have also hurt their credit record and compromised their identity by providing personal information, including account numbers."

Who Is Targeted

The schemes focus on people who are current on their payments as well as those who may be facing foreclosure. The cons claim they can eliminate various debt, including mortgages, credit card balances and other loans.

What to Watch For

Schemes vary wildly. A recent variation involves fraudsters sending the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's (OCC) Customer Complaint Form in a package of documents and asking the victim to sign the last page, leaving the rest of the form blank. The fraudster then completes the form and sends it into the OCC, falsely claiming that the financial institution acted improperly.

Fraudsters might use technical and legal-sounding language to give victims a sense of competence and credibility, but remember, no one can magically make debt disappear by paying a third party a fee that's a small fraction of the amount legally owed.

What You Can Do

OCC officials encourage consumers to contact their creditors. Often, banks and other financial institutions are in the best position to work with borrowers to correct mistakes or to work out plans to assist you.

Consumers who are concerned about foreclosure may benefit from credit counseling. The Center for Foreclosure Solutions provides counselors around the clock, seven days a week, at (888) 995-HOPE to assist in English and Spanish.

Consumers with questions about their bank can visit www.HelpWithMyBank.gov. The site provides answers to common banking questions and instructions on contacting the OCC or legitimately filing a formal complaint against a bank. NAPS

FTB Hoping to Return Unclaimed California Tax Refunds

The Franchise Tax Board (FTB) is trying to find more than 37,000 California taxpayers who are owed $9.8 million in state tax refunds that remain unclaimed.

"California taxpayers that have not received their 2006 refund can call the Franchise Tax Board and have a quick replacement check sent," said State Controller and FTB Chair John Chiang.

This year FTB issued nearly 10 million refunds worth more than $8.4 billion.

At issue are uncashed individual refunds ranging from a few dollars to more than $68,000.

In many of the cases the refund checks are returned to the FTB as undeliverable by the U. S. Post Office because taxpayers have moved between the times they filed their taxes and the refunds were mailed.

FTB automatically reissues returned refunds once a new address is received.

Taxpayers who have changed addresses are encouraged to call the FTB to update their address.

Taxpayers can check the status of their refund at the FTB Website www.ftb.ca.gov. The feature is available in English and Spanish.

Taxpayers may also check the status of their refund and update their address by calling (800) 852-5711 between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

"Taxpayers in doubt about their refunds can go online and check the status or call the FTB to get the refunds they are owed," Chiang said. "Choosing direct deposit can speed up the time it takes to get the refund into your bank account and is an easy way to avoid the headache of chasing down a refund."

To avoid delayed refunds, FTB encourages taxpayers to use direct deposit for a quick way to receive their state income tax refunds.

In 2007 more than 4.2 million taxpayers had more than $4 billion directly deposited into their bank accounts. This tops the previous year's 3.8 million total taxpayers who had $3.4 billion in direct deposit refunds.

Visitacion Valley History Project

Memories donated by Valley residents sharing some of their experiences of living here.

"Project SAFE (Safety Awareness for Everyone) a citizens' crime prevention program of the SFPD. The police coordinator was (then) Lt. Frank Jordan (later Chief, and then Mayor). The citizen leader was Tony Lohr and the lead organizer was Gary Yoes. The project was kicked off with a community meeting at the Catholic Church with more than 300 residents.

"The mayor at the time was George Moscone, SAFE was among his chief neighborhood programs."

"I grew up in the Bayview, just over the hill from Vis Valley. I didn't spend time in Vis Valley until I started working in the neighborhood in 1994. I moved to Little Hollywood in 1996. My earliest memory of the neighborhood is the Polynesian restaurant that used to be at the corner of Leland and Rutland. I remember that building because it had a wonderful mural on the side, a tropical scene. This was probably in the late '80s."

"As a child, my brothers and I and the kids of Arleta Street would climb the hills just below Mansell Street and we'd take our large, flat pieces of cardboard and slide down the hill, just to do it all over again."

"My most precious memory is our last Halloween party/haunted house in Geneva Towers! It was a blast! Everyone partied and ate candy until the security shut down the party, due to the late hour of the night! You just had to be there!"

"I came to live in Visitacion Valley in 1963 when I married Sal Jimenez at Our lady of Visitacion Valley Church, and had two children, Mary and Alan. Leland Avenue had great neighborhood businesses that included various stores, restaurants and pharmacies, a place to meet your fellow neighbors.

"The Valley was a beautiful place to live back then and still is today. I love this area and will continue to live here"

"Up the street from the Athletic Club (now Thutmose Hall) was a nickelodeon where the community enjoyed the films of the day for five cents. Later, the Bayshore Theater brought movies to the Valley, with added features common in the twenties and thirties such as Dish Night (free dinnerware for the ladies), and Amateur Night. I won a few small prizes of money and once a big prize, a ten pound box of chocolates – the Wikse family had a fine treat with that prize!" -*Clarence Wikse oral history*

The Visitacion Valley History Project invites you to share your memories. Call Betty Parshall, (415) 467-7423 or Edie Epps (415) 467-0236, or e-mail your stories to visvalleyhistory@hotmail.com

On Our Way to Energy Independence

by Speaker Nancy Pelosi

Last November, the American people made it clear that our country needed a New Direction. In the first session of the 110th Congress, we have made historic strides to make America, restore the American Dream, and restore accountability. And last month, we successfully passed a sweeping new energy policy — the Energy Independence and Security Act. This landmark energy bill will lead our nation on a path to energy independence, with clean and renewable energies, and lower prices for consumers.

Instead of remaining wedded to the failed energy policy of the past that keeps us dependent on foreign oil, the New Direction Congress has embraced a clean, renewable, independent energy future for America. One way to make Americans safer is to grow our energy here at home. That is why we have made an historic commitment to homegrown biofuels – increasing the Renewable Fuels Standard to 36 billion gallons in 2020. The crops America's farmers grow are becoming the fuel that powers our cars as we send our energy dollars to the Midwest, not the Middle East – to farmers nationwide. America's farmers will fuel America's energy independence, promoting small businesses and creating millions of new jobs.

Energy independence is an urgent national security issue; it is an environmental issue; it is a health issue; it is a moral issue; and it is an economic issue for America's families. In order to reduce the price at the pump, our legislation made an historic increase in fuel efficiency standards – for the first time in 32 years.

Raising these standards to 35 mpg by 2020 will save the average driver $700 to $1,000 each year, adding up to $22 billion in net annual consumer savings by 2020.

Energy security is also closely related to global warming – the greatest environmental challenge facing the planet. The urgency of that challenge was recognized last month as former Vice President Al Gore was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and as world leaders gathered for the Bali global warming conference. The Bush Administration has responded far too slowly to the threat of climate change. Our energy bill will tell the world that America is prepared to become a leader in addressing the global climate crisis.

And in San Francisco, we continue to be on the forefront of protecting our environment. Under the leadership of Mayor Gavin Newsom, the City has implemented a number of innovative policies that set the standard for how localities can play a leading role in halting global warming.

In fact, Mayor Newsom has recently proposed legislation that would enact the strictest environmental building codes in the nation for some residential buildings, commercial buildings, and renovation projects. He has also championed the use of biofuels by mandating that all 1,500 city owned diesel vehicles – including fire engines, ambulances, buses and street sweepers – run on more environmentally friendly biodiesel.

The comprehensive energy legislation passed by the New Direction Congress is an historic achievement that will secure America, create more jobs, protect our environment, and set us on the path to energy independence. In the new year, Congress will continue our efforts to combat global warming.

McLaren Park News and Notes

by Betty Parshall

Final Selection for McLaren Park Art

An independent selection panel has recommended the San Francisco artist team of Peter Richards and Susan Schwartzenberg to the Arts Commission to create and install an outdoor public art work in McLaren Park. The panel's recommendation will be presented to the Arts commission for final approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting at 3 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 7, at 25 Van Ness Ave.

The winning concept is titled "Philosopher's Walk." It proposes granite marker stones, signposts and seating along existing park trails. Images and written reflections on park ecology, geography, history and the surrounding neighborhoods would be reproduced on the various stones and signposts. The proposal also calls for a downloadable map of the trails to be posted on several public websites.

Richards and Schwartzenberg will coordinate with park users and neighbors in the final selection of routes, imagery and writings. A community meeting with the artists will be scheduled early in 2008, after the Arts Commission approval.

You can find the proposal design at www.sfartscommission.org/pubart/opportunities/index.htm.

Friends of McLaren Park Meeting

The Friends of McLaren Park (FOMP) meet regularly on the third Saturday of the month at 10:a.m. in the community building at Louis Sutter Playground. Members are asked to contribute dues of $10 a year to help defray the costs of mail and supplies. The group promotes cleanup activities, park improvements, and use of the amphitheater. It also addresses safety issues and other concerns brought to its attention by park users and the community in general.

While there are some Valley residents who have joined the group, are supportive and participate on occasion, there is a lack of Valley folks at the regular meetings. When officers were elected at the December meeting, I was asked if I would be willing to be a "member-at-large" to represent Visitacion Valley. I agreed, but I would really like to have a few more Valley folks who could attend these meetings. One difficulty is the date usually coincides with the Visitacion Valley Planning Alliance meetings, which I am also interested in. Anybody out there who could share this responsibility?

This is also a request for your input so even if you are not able to attend a meeting, I can bring your questions and ideas to the group. McLaren Park is a great neighborhood resource we can all treasure and use, so I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

The December meeting of the FOMP included the following items:

*Trees that were planted around the new blue water tower will be moved to other locations because they would grow too tall and block the magnificent views. Replacement plants will be of a low-growing variety.

*New benches and tables for the group picnic area have been delivered to the park and will be installed soon.

*The Next Arts group that produced three evening concerts recently failed to receive an Arts Commission grant for similar productions. President Franco Mancini will submit a grant application which if approved will enable the Friends to organize concerts in the park.

*Recreation & Park Department is considering a renovation of the Sutter Playground playing field, including artificial turf. While installation of this has proved a big success at the Silver Terrace, Sutter presents a challenge due to the clay soil that can prevent good drainage.

*A speeding car totaled one road sign pointing to the amphitheater.

*A jungle play area has been proposed on a site next to the Louis Sutter play area.

*A grant is being sought for tiling of the planter box and retaining walls in the Louis Sutter play area.

There will be a work day at McNab Lake, located at the Louis Sutter playground, on Saturday, Jan. 12 at 10 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 19 at 10 a.m.

For more information about FOMP, you can visit the website at www.jennalex.com/projects/fomp/homepage

You can contact the group directly from the website, or you can contact me with questions and your input: Betty Parshall: bparshal@flash.net (415) 467-7423

VVCDC Seeks Voices to Create Regional Vision

by Katherine Williams

Visitacion Valley Community Development Corporation (VVCDC) officially released the book *Harnessing Change to Create Sustainable Growth, The Visitacion/Guadalupe Watershed: A Regional Perspective* to a crowd of residents, activists, city personnel and others on Wednesday, Dec. 5..

Pointing out a few of the various buildings on the Watershed model.

The booklet provides a current snapshot of the region (Visitacion Valley, Brisbane, and Daly City), information on upcoming and pipeline development projects, demographics, and the state of the watershed today.

The event included an introduction to the book, proposed timeline for creating a regional plan, and presentations from local speakers. The speakers brought their perspectives on the topic of regional planning.

Brad Paul, of the Elise and Walter Haas, Jr Fund, encouraged having a positive vision instead of focusing on the negatives and the continuous outreach to all sectors of the community.

Rosey Jencks, of SFPUC, highlighted the opportunities that street and water system improvements, done in conjunction with other projects, can bring to the region.

Tom Radulovich, of Livable City, emphasized retaining local knowledge and using multi-objective solutions.

Over the next year, VVCDC, with assistance from Asian Neighborhood Design, will facilitate discussions, help gather concerned stakeholders, present workshops and be the place where existing resident groups, as well as planners and developers can find a place to meet and discuss their plans and visions for the Visitacion/Guadalupe Watershed.

All stakeholders in the current and future residents of this important region are encouraged. Please contact VVCDC for more information at (415) 587.7896 x101.

City Carbon Offsets to Fight Global Warming

From Page 1

"San Francisco's Climate Action Plan commits to reducing localized greenhouse gas emissions to 20 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. To meet this goal, the City has implemented a broad array of aggressive emission reduction measures.

"In addition to pursuing direct reduction measures, our local government can also play a leadership role mitigating carbon emissions that are produced in San Francisco by government, residents and businesses. The purchase of 'carbon offsets' allow this mitigation to occur by funding activities that either absorb carbon from the atmosphere or reduce carbon that would otherwise be emitted into the air.

"Through this Executive Directive, I am directing the City's Department of Environment to develop and pilot a Local Carbon Offset Program, the first of its kind in the United States. This Program will fund carbon-offset activities exclusively within San Francisco's boundaries. In doing so, it will give city departments, local businesses and residents alike the opportunity to mitigate carbon pollution generated by their own activities, while investing in building a sustainable local renewable energy economy and improving the environment within the community in which we live. This program differs from existing carbon offset programs that seek to offset carbon pollution far away from where this pollution is actually created."

End of Year Tax Tips For State Taxpayers

With tax season just around the corner, the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) offers Californians tips on planning for next year's filings.

*Use the tax calculator available at www.ftb.ca.gov to estimate your tax. Now is a great time to project taxes due for 2007 before April 15 arrives. If you are under withheld, you have time to make added tax payments now to avoid problems later. To make a tax payment online, try FTB's Web Pay service.

*Get organized. Now is a good time to start collecting the receipts and documents you will need to file your tax return. Items to collect include: last year's tax return, receipts for charitable contributions, and your car registration. Watch your mail for W-2s and 1099s and put them in a safe place.

*Need an email reminder to file? You can request one from FTB's Website via the Email Reminder to File. The reminder also contains links to other areas of the Website that provide information to make filing easier such as e-file information, tips to avoid common mistakes, and what to do if you cannot pay.

*Looking for a tax professional? Last year, 68 percent of taxpayers had their returns professionally prepared. If you choose to hire someone to prepare your tax return, be sure it is someone you know or you can trust. These organizations may be helpful in finding a tax professional:

*CPAs and Public Accountants are licensed by the California Board of Accountancy. To locate a CPA, contact the California Society of Certified Public Accountants at (800) 922-5272 or visit www.calcpa.org.

*Enrolled Agents are licensed by the federal government. To locate one near you, contact the California Society of Enrolled Agents at (800) 829-7765 or visit www.csea.org.

*Tax preparers registered with the California Tax Education Council can be found by calling (877) 850-2832 or visiting www.ctec.org.

Greywater Design and Installation Workshop

Want to know all about greywater or learn to design and install a greywater system? Come to a hands-on Greywater Design Workshop hosted by the Greywater Guerrillas on Saturday, Jan. 5 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 238 Wilde Ave.

The workshop will start with a presentation about a variety of types of greywater systems and the design process, then a greywater system will be built on site. In this case - from the kitchen sink to the back of the garden for watering fruit trees.

Cost of the workshop is $15 - $20 sliding scale, with limited scholarship available. Beverages and snacks included. Wear work clothes, bring gloves, and a camera if you want to take pictures. There will also be greywater books for sale.

Please RSVP! Once registered, a confirmation will be sent. To register, email tarahui@hotmail.com

For more information on the Greywater Guerrillas, go to http://greywaterguerrillas.com

Police Meeting at Community Center

An Ingleside Police Station monthly meeting with Captain Denis O'Leary is tentatively scheduled for Friday, Jan. 11 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Visitacion Valley Community Center, 50 Raymond Ave.

Clean Break Away from Toxic Products

Here's news that may help you breathe easier: You don't have to use a household cleanser that leaves unhealthy compounds in the air.

That's because you can join the recent green movement in helping eliminate these volatile villains by reverting to all-natural solutions, saving the environment outdoors as well as indoors. Here are some tips:

*_All-Over Odors_: Opening the windows is a good first step to freshen a home, but on cold days that may not be possible, and it's often not enough. A better idea would be to use an all-natural device that traps and eliminates stale air and unpleasant smells through vortex cleaning action technology. The device, called HoMedics brethe air revitalizer, uses the power of water and natural botanicals. Products such as these are as close as you can get to "washing" your air without exposing pets or children to harmful chemicals.

*_Kitchen_: Though many are not aware, kitchens surpass every room in the house in terms of germs. But before you turn to chemical cleansers, remember, natural products are just as effective. A solution of equal parts vinegar and water cleans germs and grease that collect on counters, stoves and other appliances and is safe to use inside refrigerators.

Baking soda eliminates pesky odors in spaces we often forget. Storing an open box in the fridge and replacing every three months keeps foods fresh and minimizes the scent of spoilage. Running the dishwasher on the rinse cycle with 1 cup of baking soda eliminates the stains and odors that hide inside.

*_Bathroom_: Clean your shower as well as it cleans you, without resorting to harsh chemicals. Cut a lemon in half, sprinkle it with baking soda and use it like a sponge to clean and shine showerheads, faucets and other brass or copper bathroom fixtures. For toilet bowls, use pure vinegar to scrub away stains and germs.

*_Bedroom_: The bedroom should be a safe haven from toxins and pollutants. A mix of equal parts water and lemon juice cleans mirrors with a streak-free shine. For green-friendly furniture polish, combine 2 cups of olive oil with 1 cup of pulp-free lemon juice. NAPS

More Than Pedestrians on Sidewalks

A maze of cars and trash containers blocked a sidewalk of a Valley street.

We're not trying to be to contemptuous this holiday season, but a quick drive around the neighborhood had us looking at way too many garbage, recycling and compost recepticles than we were comfortable in seeing. Many of these containers are left out every single day, even though the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed an ordinance in July of 2006 making it illegal to keep cans out for more than 24 hours past the collection day.

Some containers always stay out.

Another chronic problem has been residents who continually park their cars on the sidewalk, a violation actually commanding a $100 fine. Said one concerned neighbor: "The Valley can still be a nice place if people would be more conscientious."

EarthTalk

Disposing Medical Waste

Dear EarthTalk: Where does all the medical waste from labs, doctor's offices and hospitals go? Does it just get put in a barrel and buried? Do they dump it in the oceans? With all the waste that is probably generated, it would be interesting to know where all those vials of blood and stuff go.
-Lee Senat, Haverford, PA

Medical waste is defined as the "biological byproduct of the diagnosis, treatment or immunization of human or animal patients" and includes so-called "sharps" (needles and scalpels), lab cultures and stocks, blood and blood products and any other wastes generated from sick patients or patients with infectious diseases. Such wastes have traditionally been disposed of by burning, either onsite at large medical or veterinary facilities, or offsite by licensed contractors that specialize in handling infectious materials. In most cases, incineration has been found to be effective in neutralizing potentially infectious agents.

But incineration, whether for medical or other purposes, doesn't come without its health and environmental risks. The process generates some highly noxious pollutants, such as mercury and dioxin. Despite modern pollution control equipment on smokestacks, some of this discharge becomes airborne where it can foul the air and end up in waterways. And the incinerator ash left over after burning is usually sent to local landfills, where the pollutants can seep into soils and groundwater if not properly contained.

Given such problems, many of the nation's largest medical waste incinerators have been shut down in recent years in the face of more stringent regulations promulgated under the U.S. Clean Air Act. In their place a wide assortment of alternative methods, including autoclaving (steam sterilization), chemical disinfection, irradiation and enzymatic (biological) processes have emerged. Today more than 100 different technologies are in use in place of incineration. Once medical waste has been decontaminated by any of these methods, it usually ends up in landfills alongside regular municipal solid waste.

Most of us never even thought about medical waste until it started washing up on beaches in New Jersey in 1987 and 1988 in an event that became known as the "Syringe Tide." The event hit the New Jersey tourism industry hard, costing it almost $1 billion in lost revenues. It also served as the basis for Barbara Ehrenreich's book, "The Great Syringe Tide" and reportedly was the inspiration for the line "hypodermics on the shores" in Billy Joel's 1989 hit, "We Didn't Start the Fire."

While there were few if any cases of people getting sick from exposure to such waste on beaches—medical waste poses a far greater risk to health care workers than to casual beachgoers—the events served as a wake-up call to federal and state governments charged with ensuring public safety. In response, Congress passed the Medical Waste Tracking Act (MWTA) in 1988, which classified different types of medical waste and called for the creation of a "cradle-to-grave" tracking system requiring medical facilities and waste haulers to account for the proper handling and whereabouts of the waste they handled.

Congress only funded MWTA for two years, but various states have since enacted their own laws and protocols based on standards set by the original legislation. Not surprisingly, the toughest laws are in place in New Jersey and other Northeast shoreline states.

Dear EarthTalk: The impacts of all the paving that is done for new roads and parking lots must be considerable. Other than Joni Mitchell's "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot" issue, what else is this activity doing that will come back to haunt us? - Libby Morse, via e-mail

The history of paving dates back to Roman times if not earlier, but our modern society has taken the practice to the extreme. Originally conceived as a way to make dirt- and mud-covered thoroughfares passable, roads (and parking lots) now cover the majority of urban and suburban areas around the world. In the U.S. alone, pavement covers some 60,000 square miles, or about two percent of the nation's total surface area. One out of every 10 acres of arable land is paved over.

Beyond larger issues like urban sprawl and the loss of farmland, paving itself is an environmental scourge, preventing the natural seepage of rainwater at the soil surface, and increasing the volume and speed of water run-off. The result is often severe soil erosion on adjacent unpaved areas. Also, paving reduces the total area through which the soil absorbs rainwater, forcing pollutant-laden run-off quickly to lower ground, increasing the risk of flooding accordingly.

Another environmental problem created by our overzealous application of asphalt is that, because the soil underneath paved areas absorbs very little water, natural aquifers below can dry up, reducing the overall amount of potable water available to people, wildlife and the larger ecosystem. Paving also prevents the growth of plant life and destroys wildlife habitat.

According to the nonprofit American Farmland Trust, which works to preserve farmland and promote healthier farming practices, Americans lose three acres of productive farmland to new paving every single minute of every day. The group reports that since the first Earth Day in 1970, the U.S. has lost more than 40 million acres of farmland to development. With Americans now spending upwards of $200 million a day building and rebuilding roads, such problems are only getting worse.

In response to such concerns, a diverse coalition of 170 community groups, individuals and businesses came together in 1990 as the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium (APM), with the goal of addressing the "tremendous environmental, social and economic damage caused by endless road building." The group charges that our society's obsession with paving and road-building draws public funds away from alternative transportation projects in service to the automobile, destroys inner cities as it promotes sprawl, fouls the air and water, contributes to global warming and—because most asphalt is a product of fossil fuels—plays into ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

Jan Lundberg, a former oil-industry insider and transportation policy analyst who helped create APM, sees a bright future in putting less emphasis on paving and roads: "Money would immediately become available for public transportation and making cities more walkable. It could also go toward refurbishing existing downtown buildings so that people could live in them. Parking lots could be de-paved to make gardens and parks. Cities can be pleasant places, you know."

Got an environmental question? Send it to EarthTalk, c/o E/The Environmental Magazine, PO Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881, submit your question at www.emagazine.com/earthtalk.html, or e-mail us at earthtalk@emagazine.com

Building Nearly Done at Coffman Pool

Work continued on the stucco exterior of the new facility housing Coffman Pool at Visitacion Avenue and Hahn Street. Construction should be completed by the end of winter with an opening date now scheduled for sometime in April 2008.

Events in January at Valley Branch Library

Following are events in January at the Visitacion Valley Branch Library:

*Jan. 8, 15, 22 and 29, Tuesday: *Mother Goose on the Loose* with stories songs and rhythms for for babies and toddlers at 11:30 a.m.

*Jan. 8, 15, 22 and 29, Tuesday: Preschool Storytime for ages 3-5 at 10:30 a.m.

*Jan. 9, Wednesday: Preschool Videos for ages 3-5 at 10:30 a.m.

*Jan. 15, Tuesday: *Yoga for Preschool Children* at 10 a.m. Young children will learn simple yoga postures with Mariana Doig. Space limited. Call (415) 355-2848 for reservations.

New Home Production Continues Decline in November

SACRAMENTO — Production of new housing in California declined further in November as homebuilders continued to take steps to reduce inventory before year-end, the California Building Industry Association reported.

Total housing starts in California, as measured by building permits issued, dropped 45 percent in November when compared to the same month a year ago to 5,498, according to housing permit data supplied by the Construction Industry Research Board. Production of single-family homes fell nearly 50 percent while construction of multifamily units decreased 36 percent when compared to November of 2006.

In November, permits were pulled for just 3,151 single-family homes statewide, down 50 percent from November 2006 and down 21 percent from the previous month, while multifamily housing starts — condos and apartments — totaled 2,347, down 36 percent from November 2006 while dropping 41 percent from the previous month. According to CIRB statistics, the single-family production level last month was the lowest recorded during November since 1981, when just 2,452 permits were pulled across the state.

During the first 11 months of the year, production began on 105,002 homes and apartments, down 31 percent from the same period last year. Single-family housing permits for the year are down 37 percent, while multifamily starts are down 21 percent for the year.

CBIA President and CEO Robert Rivinius said he hopes state lawmakers will take a much-needed look at making home production more feasible when grappling with the $14 billion deficit projected for California's budget next year.

"The homebuilding industry has been a major economic engine for most of the past decade," Rivinius said. "However, with ever tightening regulations and restrictions put on homebuilding, the industry is no longer generating the employment and tax revenues it had been in the early part of this millennium.

"It would only make sense for policymakers to address the over-regulation put on homebuilding and to ease restrictions while streamlining the homebuilding process to help jump-start the economy and put much-needed revenue back into state and local coffers, which by the looks of things, is urgently needed," he said.

Rivinius also noted that a number of local jurisdictions continue to increase fees imposed on the construction of each new home even during a downturn in the market, further hampering the ability of working families and first-time buyers to be able to afford their first home.

"Reducing or even eliminating some of these fees, which in more and more cases can exceed $100,000 per home or condominium unit, would go a long way in getting the economy back on track and at the same time help thousands of Californians attain the American Dream of homeownership."

IRS Announces 2008 Standard Mileage Rates

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service issued the 2008 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes.

Beginning Jan. 1, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (including vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be: 50.5 cents per mile for business miles driven; 19 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes; and 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.

The new rate for business miles compares to a rate of 48.5 cents per mile for 2007. The new rate for medical and moving purposes compares to 20 cents in 2007. The rate for miles driven in service of charitable organizations has remained the same.

The standard mileage rate for business is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile; the standard rate for medical and moving purposes is based on the variable costs as determined by the same study.

Some Creative Ways to Choose a Great Children's Book

by Wendy Mass

The books we read as children have the power to change us. They transport us to faraway places, and return us safely home. The characters can seem as real to us as our own family and friends, and we laugh and cry along with them. Here are some ways to ensure the young readers on your shopping list get their hands on the perfect book.

1. If you don't have much time to search, look for books with award stickers on them. Dedicated committees of librarians spend a lot of time selecting the cream of the crop so you don't have to.

2. Pass along the books that you loved growing up. These are very often still in print, and often with updated covers. This is also a great way to bring you and your young reader closer.

3. For young children, bring them with you to the library or bookstore, and let them sample a few different types of picture books to see what art styles appeal to them the most.

4. Don't pass over classics like The Cat in the Hat and Charlotte's Web. Just because you've seen them your whole life, doesn't mean a child has.

5. Look for books that deal with the particular stage of life of your reader—everything from learning to share to dealing with bullies to relationship issues.

6. Describe your young reader's interests, hobbies, and reading level to a children's librarian or bookseller, and ask for appropriate recommendations. (Or if browsing online, put the child's interests into the search option of BN.com or Amazon.com and read reviews from kids on what comes up.)

7. Take your older children to the bookstore with you and give them the freedom to pick for themselves from the appropriate section, without judgment on their selections.

8. If you have a reluctant reader and are going on a trip this holiday season, try an audiobook. Perfect for long car rides, they can also be downloaded onto computers and mp3 players.

When you give children a book, you are handing them a whole new world. What better gift is there than that?

Wendy Mass is the author of six books for young readers, including the award-winning "A Mango-Shaped Space" and "Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life." Visit her at www.wendymass.com.

Saturdays are Special at Randall Museum

The Randall Museum offers drop-in, hands-on art and science workshops every Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. at 199 Museum Way (off Roosevelt, above the Castro). Workshops are $3 per child; $5 for a parent and child combo. All kids under 8 must be with a paying adult. Call 554-9600 for further information.

*Jan. 5: Design and make your own colorful scratch prints.

*Jan. 12: Make invisible paint and learn to make your beautiful paintings magically appear.

*Jan. 19: Discover the wonder of Chinese brush painting and sign your masterpiece with your own printed signature chop.

*Jan. 26: Discover beauty in gravity as you create paintings with your own hand-made paint pendulum.

Other regular Saturday activities include:

*Morning Family Ceramics from 10 to 11:30 a.m. ($5 per person workshop fee)

*Meet the Animals from 11:15 a.m. to 12 noon.

*Animal Feeding at 12 noon.

*Golden Gate Model Railroad Club Exhibit from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Book Review

More Little Known Tales In California History

As author Alton Pryor recalls, "I was fired after working for 27 years as a writer for California Farmer magazine, a statewide publication that circulated to virtually every farmer in the state. It came as a real blow in a telephone call from a man I didn't know and had never met. The magazine was sold to a midwestern company and that company was literally cleaning house. That included the writing staff, which was me."

Having later amassed 41 unpublished articles and nearing age 70, he decided to self-publish his very first book in 1997, *Little Known Tales in California History* where readers could read about: a lost Spanish galleon that still lies on the bottom of the Salton Sea, which at one time was an inland sea stretching all the way to the Gulf of California; Pegleg Smith's lost gold mine still waiting for someone to rediscover it; and both sides of a controversy if Joaquin Murietta was only only the myth of an early day newspaper reporter.

One decade and 18 books later, Pryor's brand has finally issued a follow-up, *More Little Known Tales in California History* (Stagecoach Publishing, $11.95).

Readers can now:

*Travel over the Old Plank Road, a wooden highway across the shifting Imperial County sand dunes or take a ride over the Old Ridge Route;

*Learn a little about about William A Richardson, the founder of San Francisco; or even

*Read about the failure of the St. Francis Dam, the second worst disaster in California where 450 people were lost amid the horrible destruction of homes and ranches.

Other books written by Pryor in the past 10 years include: more than a dozen various titles on western history, an interesting children's book called *Jonathan's Red Apple Tree*, and his own self-publishing book, *Publish It Yourself, Five Easy Steps to Getting Your Book in Print.*

"While I'm still not getting rich from it,' admitted Pryor, "I have never had such satisfaction in my life as I am having with writing and publishing my books."

More information is available at www.stagecoachpublishing.com

Mayor Considers Sweetened Beverage Fee

Mayor Gavin Newsom on Dec. 17 announced that he is looking into a sweetened beverage fee on big-box retailers that sell drinks sweetened by high-fructose corn syrup, in order to mitigate the impact of obesity on San Francisco's population. The fees would generate revenue to expand Shape Up San Francisco, Mayor Newsom's comprehensive anti-obesity initiative.

"A small fee on sweetened beverages is an interesting concept which my administration will be exploring in the coming weeks," said Mayor Newsom. "Beverages sweetened by high-fructose corn syrup are standing in the way of our efforts to combat obesity. With all of the mounting evidence showing that children are increasingly at risk for poor health because of these drinks, it's time for us to explore every avenue and examine every innovative idea, in the hopes of making obesity a thing of the past."

According to an as yet unreleased draft report by the San Francisco Department of Public Health:

*In the past 50 years, calorically sweetened beverage consumption has increased 500 percent, and it is now the leading source of added sugars in children's diets.

*Calorically sweetened beverages account for more than 10% of total daily caloric intake for the average child, representing a doubling since 1980.

*Researchers have attributed the increase in the consumption of calorically-sweetened beverages as a stronger link to pediatric obesity than other correlated factors such as higher fat content or decreased physical activity.

Shape Up San Francisco was launched in May 2006 to address the public health crisis of obesity, inactivity and poor nutrition in San Francisco. Its mission is to increase the awareness of and opportunities for increased physical activity and improved nutrition where people live, play, work and learn.

To date, Mayor Newsom and Shape Up San Francisco have incorporated standards, as well as worksite wellness into each San Francisco city department's goals and objectives, expanded the City's Summer Lunch Program in schools to increase fresh produce in school lunches, and implemented a 12-week walking challenge that provides a regular exercise routine for children and youth and encourages families to be physically active together.

Crossword Puzzle Solution

B	A	C	■	K	A	G	O	■	W	R	A	P		
O	P	E	■	A	L	E	A	■	I	A	M	B		
N	I	B	■	K	I	T	H	■	D	I	B	S		
N	A	U	R	U	■	■	E	D	E	N	■	■		
■	■	■	U	R	G	E	■	U	N	C	A	S		
W	I	S	E	■	R	A	F	F	■	O	C	A		
R	P	M	■	C	O	V	E	Y	■	A	T	A		
A	S	A	■	O	G	E	E	■	E	T	A	L		
P	E	L	E	E	■	S	L	A	P	■	■	■		
■	■	L	A	L	O	■	■	L	A	M	I	A		
B	E	E	R	■	G	O	A	L	■	A	D	C		
A	B	E	L	■	R	A	N	A	■	C	E	A		
A	B	L	Y	■	E	T	A	H	■	H	A	D		

Cooking Corner

Onion-Vegetable Soup

(Serves 8 to 10) 2 medium or 1 large OsoSweet onion, diced; 3 to 4 medium carrots, diced; 3 to 4 ribs celery, thinly sliced; 2 to 3 cloves garlic, crushed or finely chopped; 1 tablespoon finely chopped rosemary, leaves from 2 sprigs; 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil; 2 quarts beef broth or stock; 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes; 3 cups finely shredded Savoy or other cabbage (1/2 small head); 1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans (white kidney beans); salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Place the onions, carrots, celery, garlic and rosemary in a large soup pot along with the olive oil. Heat together and cook over medium heat 6 to 8 minutes or until the vegetables are crisp-tender.

Add the remaining ingredients and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce the heat to a simmer and continue to cook, partially covered, for 30 minutes or until the cabbage is tender and the soup is lightly thickened. Serve piping hot in big bowls.

For more delicious sweet onion recipes, visit ososweetonions.com. NAPS

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Visitacion Valley Police Report

Police Cases

*On Nov. 20 at 6:30 a.m., officers were sent to Cambridge and Wayland streets on the call of a traffic accident. There they found a recreational vehicle blocking the street. They questioned a man working on the RV and its owner. Both men were wanted on warrants for driving with a suspended or revoked license. Both were booked at Ingleside Station.

*On Nov. 24 at 7:15 p.m., a Visitacion Valley man reported that he had been robbed at knife point on the 200 block of Parque Drive.

*On Nov. 25, officers had been looking for an 18-year old San Mateo man wanted for shooting a Visitacion Valley woman during a robbery the week before. The man was found driving a car at Santos Street and Blythdale Avenue at 10:45 p.m. by offices. The man was arrested for attempted murder and booked at Ingleside Station.

*On Dec. 4 at 9:23 a.m., an officer arrested a 35 year-old Visitacion Valley man for criminal threats and vandalism in a domestic violence case on the 200 block of Blythdale Ave. At 9 p.m., a 35 year-old Bayview District man was arrested in the 600 block of Sunnydale Avenue for domestic violence charges.

*On Dec. 6 at 2:40 p.m., an officer was working a plainclothes assignment in Visitacion Valley when he found himself behind motorist who was acting suspiciously. The officer learned that the car was reported stolen and he called for a marked radio car to stop the stolen car. The motorist eluded the officer. Another officer then found the stolen car abandoned on the 200 block of Avalon Street. That officer soon found the motorist at Lisbon Street and Brazil Avenue. The first officer identified the motorist, a 22 year-old Visitacion Valley district man. the man was arrested and charged with three felonies; his parole was revoked as well. At 10 p.m., an officer and posses were summoned to a home on Wabash Terrace. Its resident complained that his nephew had been acting strangely. The officers determined that the 32 year-old nephew had been smoking crack cocaine. He was arrested and nine rocks of crack were seized.

*On Dec. 11 at 11:20 a.m., an officer took custody of a trespasser on the 100 block of Britton Street. The 49 year-old Visitacion Valley man had been released on a promise to appear for the same offense two hours before. The man was booked at Ingleside Station for a continuing offense.

*On Dec. 11 at 11:20 a.m., an officer took custody of a trespasser on the 100 block of Britton Street. The 49 year-old Visitacion Valley man had been released on a promise to appear for the same offense two hours before. The man was booked at Ingleside Station for a continuing offense.

*On Dec. 13 at 4:45 p.m., Bayview officers responded to the area of Paul and San Bruno Avenues on report of a person carrying a rifle. The man was spotted walking on the street. An officer was the first to reach the man. As he got closer it appeared that suspect was attempting to take the rifle out of the carrying case. The man was tackled and taken into custody and the gun was recovered. The man was booked on weapons charges.

*On Dec. 18 at 3:21 a.m., an officer arrested a 52 year-old Visitacion Valley woman for criminal threats and battery in a residence on the 100 block of Britton Street.

Police Summaries

*Nov 13: Sweeny St. and Barneveld Ave., stolen truck.

*Nov 13. 2:15 a.m., Visitacion Ave. and Rey St., Visitacon Valley District man arrested for possessing a sawed-off shotgun.

*Nov 13 10:15 a.m., 1200 block of Sunnydale Ave., Bayview District man arrested for trespassing and for a local warrant.

*Nov 13 9:50 p.m., Silver Ave. and Brussels St., armed robbery with knife.

*Nov 13: Burrows and Goettingen Sts., petty theft of property.

*Nov 13: Brussels St. and Silver Ave., robbery on the street with a dangerous weapon.

*Nov 14 6:30 a.m., 100 block of Brookdale Ave., Visitacon Valley woman arrested for local misdemeanor warrant.

*Nov 14: San Bruno Ave. near Silliman St., grand theft from building.

*Nov 14 Harvard St. near Silliman St., malicous mischief, vandalism of vehicles.

*Nov 15: 12:10 p.m., Sunnydale Ave. and Rey St., Mission District man arrested for possessing narcotics and resisting arrest.

*Nov 15: 3 p.m., 100 block of Guttenberg St., residential burglary, entry via unlocked front door

*Nov 16: 1:20 p.m., 100 block of Santos St., Visitacon Valley man cited, prescription medicine violation.

*Nov 16: 4 p.m., 300 block of Arleta Ave., residential burglary, rear window forced open.

*Nov 16: 4:30 p.m., Unit block of Delta St., residential burglary, front door forced open.

*Nov 17: Harvard St. near Silliman St., robbery on street, strongarm

*Nov 17. 5:45 p.m., Santos St. and Brookdale Ave., strongarm robbery

*Nov 17: 500 block of Campbell St., stolen vehicle, '98 Honda Civic.

*Nov 18: 2:50 a.m., 1700 block of Sunnydale Ave., Visitacon Valley woman arrested for domestic violence.

*Nov 18: 11:30 a.m., 1000 block of Girard St., Bayview man arrested for violating a court order

*Nov. 19: 10 a.m., McLaren Park, auto burglary

*Nov. 19: 5:40 p.m., 700 block of Velasco St., attempted murder, robbery attempt, victim shot once.

*Nov. 19: 8 p.m., 400 block of Campbell Ave., strongarm robbery

*Nov 19: 8 p.m., Unit block of Santos St., shots fired into a building

*Nov 19: 100 block of Elliot St., recovered vehicle, '90 Honda Accord.

*Nov 20: 9 a.m. to 12 noon, 1500 block of Sunnydale Ave., residential burglary, forced entry, kitchen window

*Nov 20: 5:15 p.m., Velasco Ave. and Santos St., armed robbery with gun.

*Nov 20: 1700 block of Sunnydale Ave., residential burglary, forced entry, front window

*Nov 21. Unit block of Brookdale Ave., stolen truck.

*Nov. 21: Lathrop Ave. near Nueva St., arson of vehicle.

*Nov 22. Argonaut Ave. and Sunrise Wy., robbery, armed with gun.

*Nov. 22: Visitacon Ave. near Rey St., grand theft from locked auto.

*Nov 22: Wayland and Holyoke Sts., stolen truck.

*Nov 23. 1600 block of Sunnydale Ave., petty theft from locked auto.

*Nov. 23: San Bruno and Campbell Aves., burglary of apartment house, unlawful entry.

*Nov 23: Unit block of Pasadena St., malicous mischief, breaking windows with BB gun.

*Nov 23 Unit block of Pasadena St., malicous mischief, vandalism.

*Nov 23. Silliman and Girard Sts., stolen automobile

*Nov 24: Felton St. near Ambler St., petty theft from locked auto

*Nov 24 Goettingen and Burrows Sts., grand theft from locked auto.

*Nov 24 Dwight St. near University St., grand theft from locked auto.

*Nov 24 1900 block of Sunnydale Ave., recovered vehicle, '92 Honda Accord

*Nov. 25. 8:30 a.m., Geneva Ave. and Santos St., strongarm robbery

*Nov 25: 8:40 a.m., 1600 block of Visitacon Ave., strongarm robbery

*Nov 25. 6:10 p.m., McLaren Park, domestic violence

*Nov. 25: 200 bock of Hahn St., malicous mischief, vandalism of vehicles

*Nov. 26: San Bruno Ave. and Felton St., petty theft, shoplifting

*Nov 26. Trioga Ave near Alpha St., burglary of residence, forcible entry

*Nov. 26: Wilde Ave. near Girard St., grand theft from locked auto.

*Nov 27: Bayshore Blvd and Raymond Ave., aggravated assault with deadly weapon.

*Nov 27 San Bruno Ave. and Felton St., battery

*Nov 28 Mansell St. near Bowdoin St., malicious mischief, vandalism

*Nov 28: Holyoke and Felton Sts., possession of narcotics paraphernalia.

*Nov 28 Holyoke and Felton Sts., petty theft from locked auto.

*Nov. 28: Holyoke and Felton Sts., possession of narcotics paraphernalia.

*Nov 28 Holyoke and Felton Sts., petty theft from locked auto

*Nov 30: Unit block of Peabody St., burglary of residence, forcible entry

*Nov 30: San Bruno Ave. and Bacon St., battery.

*Dec 1. 100 block of Blythdale Ave., robbery on street, strongarm.

*Dec. 1 100 block of Blythdale Ave., burglary of residence, forcible entry

*Dec. 1: Goettingen and Burrows Sts., stolen and recovered automobile

*Dec. 1. Burrows St. ner Holyoke St. robbery on street, strongarm.

*Dec. 1: Visitacion Ave. and Sawyer St., possession of cocaine.

*Dec. 1: Sunnydale Ave. and Desmond St., possession of narcotics paraphernalia

*Dec 2 Blythdale Ave. and Santos St., malicous mischief, vandalism of vehicles

*Dec. 2: 100 block of Tucker Ave., stolen automobile

*Dec. 2: Brussels St. near Ordway St., aggravated assault with gun.

*Dec. 3 5:10 p.m., 100 block of block of Blythdale Ave., aggravated assault, suspect known.

*Dec. 3 10 p.m., 400 block of Argonaut Ave., armed robbery

*Dec. 3 100 block of Blythdale Ave., aggravated assaul with deadly weapon

*Dec. 3 Silver Ave. and Colby St. robbery on street, strongarm

*Dec. 4 Ankeny and Alder Sts., stolen automobile.

*Dec. 4 Wayland and Ambler Sts., stolen automobile

*Dec. 4 100 block of Cora St. malicous mischief, vandalism of vehicles

*Dec. 5: 9 p.m., Silver Ave. and Gerard St., armed robbery, gun, suspects known, gambling debt.

*Dec. 5: Ambler and Silliman Sts. robbery on street, strongarm

*Dec. 6: Leland Ave. and Sawyer St., recovered vehicle, '91 Honda Accord.

*Dec. 6: Wayland and Girard Sts. burglary of apartment house, forcible entry

*Dec. 6: Unit block of Wabash Ter., possession of base/rock cocaine.

*Dec. 6: San Bruno Ave. and Wayland St., grand theft from locked auto.

*Dec. 6: Girard St. near Wayland St., burglary of apartment house, forcible entry

*Dec. 7: 11:08 p.m., 31 year-old Visitacon Valley man arrested for aggravated assault at Sunnydale Ave. and Garrison St.

*Dec. 7: 5:45 a.m., Sunnydale Ave. and Santos St., strong arm robbery

*Dec. 7. Sunnydale Ave. and Bayshore Blvd., stolen vehicle, '87 car trailer

*Dec. 8: 8:41 p.m., 23 year-old Bayview District woman arrested for local burglary warrant on 100 block of Arleta Ave

*Dec. 8 11:30 a.m., Visitacion Ave and Britton St., strongarm robbery

*Dec. 9. San Bruno Ave. and Bacon St., grand theft, pursesnatch.

*Dec. 8. 1800 block of Sunnydale Ave., recovered vehicle, '93 Saturn SC *Dec 10: 2:30 a.m., 1700 block of Felton St., vehicle strip (four wheel-covers taken).

*Dec. 10: 12 noon, Unit block of Santos St., residential burglary (occurred between Dec. 8 and 9)

*Dec. 10. 7:43 p.m., 400 block of Wilde Ave., armed robbery, gun, liquor store

*Dec. 10 7:44 p.m., 400 block of Harkness St., armed robbery, gun (same suspects as Wilde Ave case)

*Dec: 10: 8:30 p.m., 100 block of Britton St., residential burglary (occurred earlier in the day)

*Dec: 10: 2400 block of Bayshore Blvd., stolen vehicle, '06 Honda Pilot.

*Dec: 10: 400 block of Sunrise Wy., recovered vehicle, '94 Saturn SL.

*Dec: 11: 1:12 p.m., Felton and Harvard Sts., vehicle strip, catalytic converter taken.

*Dec. 11 7:55 p.m., 200 block of Blythdale Ave., vandalism, BBs shot through window

*Dec. 13 3.19 a.m., 1700 block of Visitacon Ave., arson, vehicle stolen in Redwood City

*Dec 14 1:21 p.m., Unit block of Santos St., criminal threats, suspect known.

*Dec. 15. Desmond St. and Visitacion Ave., stolen vehicle, '93 Saturn SL2.

*Dec. 16 6:14 p.m., Unit block of Blythdale Ave., residential burglary

*Dec. 17: 2:45 p.m., 200 block of Hahn St., residential burglary (occurred between 1:45 and 2:30 p.m.).

*Dec. 17: 5:57 p.m., 1500 block of Sunnydale Ave., residential burglary (occurred between 2 and 5 p.m.).

*Dec. 17: 600 block of Sawyer St., recovered vehicle, '92 Saturn SL.

*Dec. 18: 100 block of Tucker Ave., stolen vehicle, '99 Honda Civic.

Both Captain Denis O'Leary of Ingleside Station and Captain Albert Pardini of Bayview Station contributed to this report.

January Classes at Garden for the Environment

Garden for the Environment will offer the following classes in December on Saturdays at the half-acre organic demonstration garden in San Francisco on 7th Avenue at Lawton Street. Since its founding in 1990, the garden has operated as a demonstration site for small-scale urban ecological food production, organic gardening, compost education and low water-use landscaping. To pre-register for classes, call (415) 731-5627 or email *info@gardenfortheenvironment.org*.

Since its founding in 1990, the garden has operated as a demonstration site for small-scale urban ecological food production, organic gardening, compost education and low water-use landscaping. Garden for the Environment is a project of the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council.

*Jan. 5: Urban Composting from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Winter can be a great time to start a new compost pile or to jump start one that just isn't breaking down. Join in on a fun, hands-on workshop teaching basic methods of both backyard and worm com-posting. Compost is a rich soil amendment that will greatly benefit your garden plants, houseplants, and the environment, by diverting compostable material from the landfill. Learn how to turn those food scraps or fallen leaves into "gardeners black gold."

*Jan. 12: Winter Pruning with Friends of the Urban Forest from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Join Garden For the Environment and Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF) for a workshop on seasonal tree care covering basic types of pruning cuts. Learn from a professional and get a chance to practice hands-on while doing good work for the community. Three ISA CEU's offered for certified arborists. Guest arborist instructor will be Pamela Lovell. Space is limited. This Resource Efficient Landscape Education workshop is free. Pre-registration required. Please RSVP with Nancy Strahan at FUF, 561-6890 x108 or nancy@fuf.net.

Grapevine Classified

VVCC BOARD MEETINGS: Visitacion Valley Community Center (VVCC) regular monthly Board meetings, held the 4th Thursday of each month at 6 p.m., except December and May, are open to the public. Board members are selected by the mem-bers of the community center with dues currently paid, at the Annual Membership meeting held the 3rd Saturday in May each year. Any vacancies that occur on the Board due to uncompleted 3-year terms of membership are filled by appointment of the remaining Board members. At least 75% of our Board members must reside in Visitacion Valley. Persons interested in Board membership are encouraged to send a letter of interest to: Board of Directors Development Committee, Visitacion Valley Community Center, 50 Raymond Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134. Please let the Board know what you could contribute that will enhance and improve our organization for better service to our community. You will be contacted and your letter will be submitted to the Board for consideration at either the next Annual election or of any available open positions that might occur within the coming year.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED for VVCC After School Program to tutor children ages 5-14 at one of our 11 sites in the Visitacion Valley area. Interested persons contact Dee Smith, VVCC After School coordinator. (415) 585-2059.

GRAPEVINE DISPLAY ADVERTISING: new limited-time rates: Full Page $60; 1/2 Page $33.75; 1/4 Page $18.75; 1/8 Page $10; 1/12 Page $8; 1/16 Page $6. Generous discount for three or more insertions. Call (415) 467-9300 for more details.

Classified: 20 words for $1. Extra line 50 cents. Ad and payment should be received by 15th of prior month at Visitacion Valley Grapevine, 50 Raymond Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134

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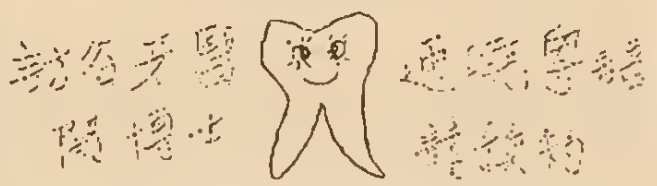

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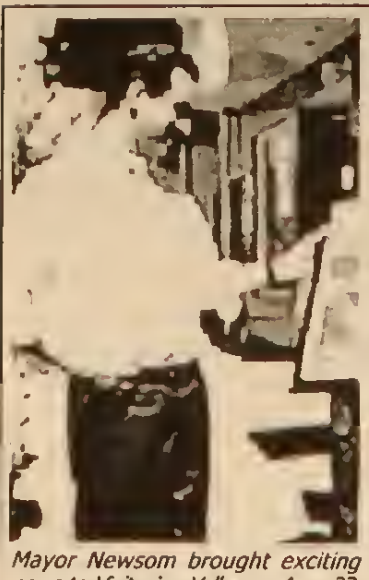

Mayor Newsom brought exciting news to Visitacion Valley on Aug. 23.

Plenty of Positives For Valley in 2007

From Page 1

*Church of the Visitacion held a Centennial Eucharistic Celebration on May 19 with Archbishop George H. Niederauer presiding to mark its 100 years in the Valley. A reception followed the ceremony in the adjacent parish hall. The Catholic church was originally founded in a small building at Visitacion Avenue and Cora Street and later moved to Locke Street before relocating to the corner of Raymond Avenue and Delta Street in 1919. The present location at 1655 Sunnydale Ave. was dedicated on Apr. 20, 1952.

*Students at VVES were awarded for completing the 10-week requirements of the Ambassadors Club, a program founded by retired educator Michael "Chappie" Grice at the request of school principal Vincent Chao to foster among a select group elementary students the elements of leadership, citizenship and improving school achievment. *Friends of Little Hollywood and San Francisco Recreation and Parks joined for a thorough Saturday morning cleaning of Little Hollywood Park on June 30.

*Mayor Newsom held a press conference at the Joe Leland Coffee Shop on Aug. 23 to announce that $4.1 million in federal transportation grants have been secured for the Leland Avenue Streetscape Project, making the project closer to fruition. He also announced plans for the development of the former Schlage Lock site.

*Visitacion Valley Middle School (VVMS) Principal James Dierke was selected National Middle School Principal of the Year. Earlier this year he was named the California 2007 Middle Grades Principal of the Year, which qualified him to be nominated for the national prize.

*Spirited performances delighted an audience at VVMS auditorium on Sept. 9 as dancers from the Beacon Tai Chi Group performed at the Tai Chi Festival.

*Marlene Tran, who retired in June from 35 years of teaching newly-arrived, immigrant students at the SFUSD Chinese Education Center, was honored for her work Sept. 15 with a community award at this year's San Francisco Immigrant Rights Summit at Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. Tran was the recipient in April of the Neighborhood Treasure award from Muni.

*Visitacion Valley Community Center (VVCC) gymnasium was filled to capacity Oct. 4 as people turned out to address the issue of violence in Visitacion Valley.

*The Police Commission's Subcommittee on Violent Crime came to the Visitacion Valley Community Center on Nov. 1 to hear people talk about their concerns and gather suggestions for improving safety in the neighborhood.

*Staff from the San Francisco Public Library presented plans on Oct. 25 for a new Branch Library proposed for the site at Leland Avenue and Rutland Street (where the current Superfair Market and parking lot are located).

*Annual state STAR test results showed VVES had reached 802 in its Academic Performance Index (API) in 2007, the mark of Education Excellence.

*Visitacion Valley Community Deacon Center held a Winter Family Festival on Dec. 1 at the Middle School cafeteria and schoolyard.

Joe Leland around the neighborhood

*Library Design Review: As part of the Branch Library Improvement Program's Design Excellence Program, a Design Review Panel will review the plans for the new Visitacion Valley Branch Library at a Library Commission meeting on Thursday, January 3 at 4:30 p.m. at the Main Library, Koret Auditorium 100 Larkin St. If you don't like the design, speak up! If you like the design, speak up! If you haven't seen the new design, stop by 45 Leland Ave. (the world's smallest library) and check out the display in the window or view it online at http://sfpl.org/news/blip/visvalleyconstruction.htm Can't make the meeting? Send comments to Mindy Linetzky at (415) 557-4354; email: mlinetzky@sfpl.org.

*Schlage Lock Open House and Masterplan: After a multi-year community planning process, the City has prepared a Draft Visitacion Valley Schlage Lock Plan Document for public review and comment (that means YOU!). The Draft Plan establishes a vision to guide the reuse of the Schlage Lock site, reincorporate the site into the neighborhood and include related neighborhood improvements. The Draft Plan document includes: A Vision for the Site and Project Area, Proposed Land Use Plan for the Schlage Locke Site, Development Controls, and Design Guidelines. Don't miss this one at the Visitacion Valley Community Center, 66 Raymond Ave. on Saturday, January 12 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

*The First Annual Joe Leland Predicts 2008: Will the New Year bring good fortune or hard luck? JOE Leland has done extensive research to bring you the answers! Several emails were sent to The Oracle at Delphi, a certified Magic 8 Ball was utilized, a crystal ball consulted, two fortune tellers were employed, and the results of at least four fortune cookies analyzed to bring you the following: The Visitacion Valley library project will not break ground in 2008. — Coffman Pool will reopen in 2008. — It will rain on a Monday. — The "mortgage meltdown" will devalue Visitacion Valley property values. — The Schlage Lock site will be adopted as an official Redevelopment Area. — History will repeat itself. — The S.F. 49ers will stay in San Francisco and have a new coach. — The City will find yet another creative way to tax the taxpayer. — Someone famous will be bring shame to their family. — Hillary Clinton will be the next President. — The Third Annual Leland Avenue Street Fair will be Visitacion Valley's biggest event of the year, so don't miss it!

Survey Shows Smokers Still Unaware of Smoking Risk

Despite major efforts to educate the public on the clear and present dangers of smoking over the past 40 years, a new survey conducted by the American Legacy Foundation and GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, the industry leader in smoking cessation, reveals that many smokers still harbor profound misperceptions about the effects of smoking and the treatments designed to help them quit.

While smokers are aware that smoking can lead to serious health problems such as lung cancer, many underestimate the risks of getting the disease from smoking. The survey found that two out of three smokers underestimate the chance of developing lung cancer compared to a non-smoker and four in 10 incorrectly believe that developing lung cancer depends more on genes than anything else. Furthermore, the survey found that up to a third of smokers mistakenly believe that activities such as exercise and taking vitamins can "undo" most of the effects of smoking.

Misperceptions about the effects of nicotine found in cigarettes remain at the forefront. Nearly 85 percent of survey respondents either were unsure or incorrectly believe that nicotine caused cancer, emphysema or heart attacks.

Nicotine-related misperceptions can prevent consideration and appropriate use of smoking cessation aids such as nicotine replacement therapies (NRT). While smoking has been proven to cause cancer, heart disease and lung disease, NRTs are not known to be associated with any serious harmful effects. In fact, more than 76 percent of smokers surveyed incorrectly believe or were unsure whether NRT products such as the gum, patch and lozenge were just as addictive as cigarettes. Of the smokers in the survey who had previously tried quitting with NRT products, 76 percent were not using it as directed.

"What is alarming about these survey findings is that so many smokers are still so misinformed," said Dr. Cheryl Healton, president and CEO of the American Legacy Foundation. "Proven cessation treatments like nicotine replacement therapy continue to be underutilized and we believe these misperceptions are partly to blame. These findings point to the fact that more needs to be done to educate and inform smokers."

Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. and currently 44.5 million adults smoke. The only proven way to reduce the threat of tobacco-related disease is to quit smoking, and many smokers need help to quit successfully. About 40 percent make an attempt to quit each year, but about five percent succeed.

For many smokers, quitting smoking requires more than willpower alone. Smokers making a quit attempt should utilize smoking cessation clinics and group support meetings in their communities to help understand what to expect and how to handle the tough situations when quitting. In addition, smokers who use NRT products such as the nicotine gum, patch and lozenge, can double their chances of successfully quitting versus cold turkey. In fact, new research published in a recent issue of Thorax confirms NRT helps "real-world" smokers quit by doubling the odds of successfully quitting long-term and support the findings of more than 100 other randomized clinical trials.

Smokers interested in learning more about cigarette addiction and making a quit attempt can visit www.way2quit.com for more information. *NAPS*

Keeping Personal Information Away from Identity Thieves

Identity theft is the fastest-growing white-collar crime in America yet it can be prevented, once you understand the tools that thieves use to commit their crimes.

Seven items make up your "identity" that can be used to open lines of credit or bank accounts or request loans in your name. They are your name, address, Social Security number, date of birth, mother's maiden name, ATM personal identification number (PIN) and bank account number.

"Think of protecting yourself from identity theft the way you think of protecting your home from burglary," says Jean Setzfand, Director of Financial Security Initiatives for AARP. "No matter what you do to secure your home, it can be burglarized. However, you still make sure you lock the doors, stop the newspapers and leave some lights on when you go away on a trip. Treat your personal information the same way-with diligence and discipline."

A recent AARP survey found that 22 percent of identity theft complainants were 50 and older and the most common type (32 percent) of theft was credit card fraud. With that in mind, taking a few practical steps can go a long way in protecting yourself:

*Do a wallet check. Limit the number of credit cards you keep with you at all times. Store your Social Security card in a safe place instead of carrying it with you. Do the same with your Medicare card, since the ID number is your Social Security number.

*Check your credit reports. At least once a year, check your credit reports. You can visit www.annualcreditreport.com to order a free annual report from one or all of the national consumer reporting companies.

*Practice everyday diligence. Don't write your PIN number on your credit card, since this gives thieves easy access to your accounts. Don't give your credit card number to telemarketers or others on the phone unless you called them.

*Read your monthly billing and savings statements. This is your opportunity to check for unknown transactions and check receipts against statements to ensure you were charged the proper amount. If you see something that doesn't look familiar or something that doesn't make sense, give your credit card company or bank a call to discuss your options.

Victims of identity theft can spend months and even years fixing the damage. Save time and money by protecting yourself and your personal information. For more information on how to do so, visit www.aarp.org. *NAPS*

Some Tips on How Best to Fight the Flu

Experts say the best way to protect your family from the flu is to get the facts and get vaccinated.

The condition that's commonly known as the flu is a contagious respiratory illness. More than 200,000 individuals are hospitalized annually in the U.S. as a result of serious flu-related complications and an average of 36,000 people die from the disease.

According to the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, annual flu shots are especially important for people who are either at high risk of having serious flu complications or living with or caring for those at high risk.

Because the viruses that cause the flu are always changing, to be effective, the composition of the flu shot needs to change, too. That's why it's important to get a shot each year. The viruses in the flu shot are inactivated, so you cannot get the flu from the vaccine. The time to get a flu vaccine starts in September and continues into winter through January or later.

For additional information and resources on immunization, visit www.hmhb.org. *NAPS*

Then and Now: A Trip Back to the '80s

Stonewashed jeans, pop music and space shuttle launches are all typically associated with the '80s. One year in particular, 1982, marked some major innovations and signs of things to come. Twenty-five years is a significant milestone by any measure, so here's a look back at American history and a year worth talking about.

The Iron Man's Run

Baltimore Orioles Hall-of-Fame shortstop Cal Ripken, Jr. began his record-breaking streak of consecutive games played in 1982. When the dust settled, baseball's "Iron Man" played in 2,632 straight games, spanning 16 seasons, breaking the record set by Lou Gehrig (known as the "Iron Horse") in 1939.

Intelligence Cubed

On June 5, 1982, the first Rubik's Cube World Championship was held in Budapest. Nineteen "speedcubists" attended the event, representing countries ranging from Australia to Hungary. The contest was won by Minh Thai, from the U.S.A., with an official time of 22.95 seconds.

Getting The Message

In 1982, by some estimates, only one in four phone calls resulted in a completed call and half of calls made were "one-way," meaning they did not require a conversation, only for a message to be left. Soon, engineers developed a solution: voice mail. Since then, countless messages have been left, helping people to connect worldwide.

Driving New Trends

On November 1, 1982, for the first time, an international automaker built a car in the United States. With its license plate reading "USA 001," a silver Honda Accord rolled off the production line in Marysville, Ohio. That car is now displayed prominently at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich. Since then, Americans have purchased more than 7 million American-made versions of the car, with the 8th-generation model currently rolling off the assembly line.

The car was assembled using primarily imported parts, including the engine. Today, the car uses engines from an engine plant in nearby Ohio, the automaker's largest auto engine plant in the world. And while some of the parts are still imported, most of the parts come from suppliers in the Midwest.

Today, the production of that first U.S.-made model is recognized as a turning point in American manufacturing. No other international automaker had attempted to make cars in the U.S. before that point. But that first car led to a wave of automakers bringing their operations and thousands of good-paying jobs to America. Since 1982, 10 other major international automakers have started producing cars in the U.S.

Back in the early 1980s, when Honda was building its first U.S. plant, many experts considered it a risky move. But the carmaker's American workforce not only built high-quality products in Ohio, it led all U.S. automakers to improve the quality of their own products to keep up. At the carmaker's invitation, engineers from the "Big 3" automakers visited its plants to study its methods.

Over the last 25 years, the company has continued to build more and more of its vehicles in the U.S. Today, nearly 80 percent of Hondas sold in this country are built in North America. That's nearly 1 million cars a year produced by workers in Ohio and Alabama. In fact, the company has now built 10 U.S. manufacturing plants and invested more than $8 billion in the U.S. economy, employing 27,000 people in the United States.

Twenty-five years ago, Honda led the way for international automakers when it became the first to produce a car in the U.S. *NAPS*

Grapevine Puzzler — Towns of Alaska

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V	S	A	G	A	L	E	N	A	V	E	G	A	R	O	H	C	N	A	A
K	S	F	I	R	K	D	A	F	O	T	A	M	A	L	A	S	O	P	F
W	F	O	A	E	E	L	B	E	T	H	E	L	C	A	S	P	R	S	F
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H	U	Y	H	H	I	D	A	V	A	N	G	H	M	S	D	E	P	N	I
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K	Z	O	A	H	U	N	F	E	E	D	E	N	N	L	I	B	E	A	E
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I	A	G	G	K	N	O	K	X	H	U	Y	T	N	D	D	C	V	V	M
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A	D	A	T	L	E	D	I	F	U	N	N	Y	F	V	C	Z	X	C	V
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N	K	E	T	C	H	I	K	A	N	O	M	E	R	E	F	D	C	V	U
A	L	A	K	A	N	U	K	A	N	O	M	M	E	G	H	K	P	O	I

Akiachak, Akutan, Alakanuk, Anchorage, Angoon, Aniak, Barrow, Bethel, Big Delta, Buffalo Soapstone, Chevak, Cordova, Craig, Delta Junction, Dillingham, Emmonak, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, Fox River, Funny River, Galena, Haines, Homer, Hooper Bay, Houston, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kipnuk, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Kwethluk, Mountain Village, Nome, North Pole, Palmer, Petersburg, Salamatof, Sand Point, Seward, Sitka, Skagway, Soldotna, Togiak, Unalaska, Unalakleet, Valdez, Wasilla

Historic Proportions

1875

Match clues to answers.

1. Emperor of China on Jan. 12.
2. Signed on May 7 between Japan and Russia.
3. He became the first person to swim the English Channel on Aug. 25.
4. Governor of California resigned onFeb. 27.
5. First organized indoor game played on Mar. 3.
6. An Egyptian invasion of this country failed on Sept. 7.
7. Winner of the first Kentucky Derby on May 17.
8. Wrecked on rocks off the Isles of Scilly on May 7..
9. Coal miner group forced to disband on Sept. 1.
10. Convention du Mètre signed here on May 20.
11. Notorious New York City politician Boss Tweed escaped from prison on Dec. 4 and fled to Cuba.
12. Famous town came into existence in what is now South Dakota.

A. Boss Tweed
B. Captain Matthew Webb
C. Ethiopia
D. Kwang-su
E. Molly Maguires
F. Aristides
G. Deadwood
H. Paris
I. SS Schiller
J. Ice hockey
K. Treaty of Saint Petersburg
L. Newton Booth

Answers: 1-D, 2-K, 3-B, 4-L, 5-J, 6-C, 7-F, 8-I, 9-E, 10-H, 11-A, 12-G.

As a Matter of Fact

*The tallest species of dogs is the Irish wolfhound which grows to be about 32 inches high at the shoulders.

*New York was the first state to require licensing of motor vehicles in 1901.

*The first known machine for making paper bags was built in the 1860s.

*In the city of Wasington D.C., no building may be built taller than the Capitol.

*The oldest earth rocks ever discovered are more than 4.1 billion years old.

*The largest living bird is the ostrich, which can weigh 330 pounds.

*The first mechanical pencil was patented in 1879.

*The hermit crab's home is an empty sea snail shell. When the crab grows too big for the shell, it hunts for a larger one.

*The first presidential mansion was at No. 1 Cherry street in New York City, the first U.S. capital from 1789 to 1790.

*The city of Pasadena, California derives its name from an American Indian word meaning "valley between the hills."

*If you think changing clocks for daylight savings time is a nuisance, consider the shadow clock which told ancient Egyptians the number of hours before or after noon. That clock had to be turned around each day at noon.

Sez Who?

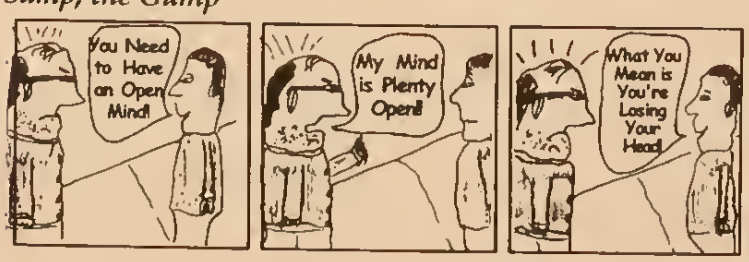
Match quotes to speakers.

1. "Well done is better than well said."
2. "Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none."
3. "Small deeds done are better thn great deeds planned."
4. "If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal — not to people or things."
5. "There's a bit of magic in everything, and some loss to even things out."
6. "Never mistake motion for action."
7. "Action is the last resource of those who know not how to dream."
8. "You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you."
9. "Genius id the ability to put into effect what is on your mind."

A. Peter Marshall
B. Lou Reed
C. F. Scott Fitzgerald
D. Benjamin Franklin
E. Albert Einstein
F. Walt Disney
G. William Shakespeare
H. Oscar Wilde
I. Ernest Hemingway

Answers: 1-D, 2-G, 3-A, 4-E, 5-B, 6-I, 7-H, 8-F, 9-C.

Sump, the Gump



Poor Rix Almanac

by Rix Quinn

Celebrating New Year

Dear Poor Rix: When did people begin to host parties for the New Year? – January Jan

Ancient Egyptians celebrated New Year when the Nile River overflowed, usually in June. Then someone suggested, "If we change New Year to January, we won't drown coming home from the party."

Early Romans named their celebration for Janus, a deity with two faces. One face looked backward, the other forward.

Today, we also reflect on the past and plan for the future. But we no longer have two faces, because the one in back is too hard to shave.

Another New Year's custom was chimney cleaning. This meant participants planned to "clean up" their faults, and strive to do better the next year.

Sadly, a few zealous cleaners toppled down the chute into the fireplace below. This was called "coming down with the flue."

The Druids celebrated the New Year on March 1. Unfortunately, that was two months late for bowl games.

But remember, these were ancient civilizations, and did not yet worship football.

Dear Poor Rix: Do you make New Year resolutions? Should I? – Julie

Poor Rix discovered long ago that the best resolutions require the least effort. Big plans often lead to big problems. Listen to these horror stories:

Last year, my friend Lisa resolved to marry. That didn't work, because that same year her boyfriend resolved to break up.

This month, one of my buddies plans to convert to vegetarianism. That's a big step, because he's a cannibal.

Complicated resolutions require extreme action. No one should ever take a giant step, except maybe on Leap Year. Perhaps these tips will help:

1. My friend Ernie plans to exercise one minute more each day. Because he doesn't exercise at all now, his routine won't change much in 2006.

2. If you're in school, resolving to make outstanding grades will require time, study, and effort. An alternative step might be: "I resolve to do better next semester, or at least not worse."

3. Ask others with the same goal for support. My buddy Dave and his wife resolved to eat better. So they dine on healthy salad, and reward themselves with junk food.

4. Limit the resolutions you make. Last year Poor Rix made only one: "Don't make resolutions for 2005." Ah, success!

5. Finally, remember that – much like world records – resolutions are made to be broken.

Dear Poor Rix: It's really cold in my town. What can I do for fun this time of year? – Don

Don, it's cold because it is winter. If it were hot, we would worry that there's a hole in the ozone layer. But the ozone layer is invisible, so it would be really hard to find the hole.

For winter amusement, many people ski. That's fun if you like to go downhill really fast. Poor Rix does not ski, because he is going downhill fast enough already.

In icy weather, it's unwise to water ski. Not only is it hard to stay up, but falling on a frozen lake is quite painful.

If you hate cold weather sports, you might go to an indoor boxing match or basketball game. (Sometimes you can see both events at once.)

Yes, cold weather can be brutal, but just think how tough our ancestors had it B.C. (before central heating). Houses got so cold at night, folks invented windows just so they could close them.

And think about long winter travel before cars. What if your wagon wheel fell off? What if your horse ran away? Or what if you got stuck outside in the snow, and your CD player broke?

Don, Poor Rix is convinced winter is like a bad date. It's cold, it's unpleasant, and it seems like it lasts forever.

Hey, Poor Rix: Can you suggest a name for my new dog? Proud Puppy Owner

Poor Rix's friend Chuck named his dog Kitty. The clever canine loves the name, and when Chuck calls him he answers with a loud "meow."

Poor Rix named his dog Wallpaper, so he'll remember he's not supposed to go on the floor.

Grapevine Five Years Ago

JANUARY 2003

*More than 100 neighborhood residents participated on Dec. 11 as Visitacion Valley Pedestrian Safety Collaborative sponsored a midday march on Arleta and Blanken avenues, as well as Bayshore Boulevard.

*San Francisco Housing Authority on Dec. 5 opened the Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. Youth Center on Sunnydale Avenue at Santos Street.

*Visitacion Valley Children's Programs held a fourth annual Family Feast at the Community Center on Dec. 13.

*Bidding begAn in January 2003 for construction of Segment F of the Third Street Light Rail Project along Bayshore Boulevard from Hester Street to Sunnydale Avenue.

Baby Boomers

by Rix Quinn

Outdoors

Three things many Boomer childhoods shared: (1) feelings of freedom, (2) constant outdoor activities, and (3) bicycles.

"We roamed the neighborhood at will," laughed one Boomer. "That was a significant area, typically limited only by four-lane roads. Alleys, trails, and creeks were all part of this urban territory.

"Our parents knew where we were, and were aware of the usual suspects with us. Bikes were the transportation of choice.

"We guys typically participated in three activities: sports, almost entirely football and baseball; biking, bike customization, hide-and-seek, and knocking over trash cans; and making forts," he added.

"What did we fear? Dogs, tree limbs breaking, and skinned knees."

School Cafeteria Food

"In elementary school I remember how delicious that cafeteria food was because it was real home cooking on-site," recalled G.M. "We had home fried chicken and catfish, as well as good barbeque and fresh vegetables."

"Also," she continued, "we paid a dime on a few Fridays and got to experience some culture. Entertainers on the Southern School Assembly circuit presented magic shows, singing, playing instruments, and telling stories. One of them was a professional whistler who did the whistling for the old radio show 'The Whistler.'"

Many Boomers in our survey gave great ratings to school food. One older Boomer said he remembered that "Lunch cost 37 cents. That includeded one meat, two vegetables, a fluffy roll, and a choice of milk or a flavored orange drink."By a small margin, members of our Boomers focus group selected fourth grade as their favorite school year. Not surprisingly, several panelists picked the quality of the year by how much they liked the teacher.

Favorite Grade in School

"By a small margin, members of our Boomers focus group selected fourth grade as their favorite school year. Not surprisingly, several panelists picked the quality of the year by how much they liked the teacher.

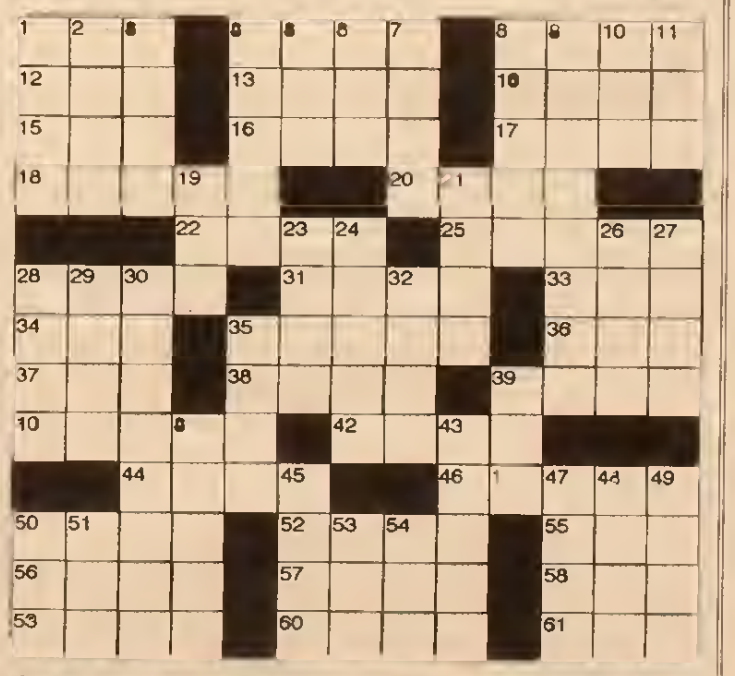
"That year I had a male teacher," said P.M. "He wanted to start an elementary school track team. The students competed in quarter-mile relay races with eight stations, and we raced against other city elementary schools."

R.R. also ranked fourth grade tops. "It was the only year in elementary school I had classes in different rooms with different teachers. I loved social studies, and we learned about different places in the world."

Rix Quinn — who wrote the book on short writing "Words That Stick" — invites your questions to rixquinn@charter.net.

Crossword Puzzle

Solution on Page 6



ACROSS
1 Cistern
4 Jap. palanquin
8 Bind
12 Unclose
13 Title of Athena
14 Poetic foot
15 Beak
16 Friends (Scot.)
17 Grape syrup
18 Pacific island
20 Land west of Nod
22 Prod
25 Last of the Mohicans
28 Sage
31 Rubbish (Brit.)
33 Wood sorrel
34 Revolutions per minute (abbr.)
35 Small flock
36 Luzon people
37 Father of Jehoshaphat
38 Pointed arch
39 And other (abbr.)
40 Caribbean volcano
42 Cuff
44 New sugarcane shoot
46 Female vampire
50 Pub fare
52 End
55 Aid to Dependant Children (abbr.)
56 Victim of Cain
57 Frog genus
58 Council for Economic Advisors (abbr.)
59 Indicating, in a way (suf.)
60 Greenland town
61 Possessed

DOWN
1 Birthplace of Beethoven
2 Samoan port
3 Phil. Island
4 Barking deer
5 Caliph
6 Win
7 U.S. dam
8 Extend
9 Mack
10 Ambassador (abbr.)
11 Public Broadcasting Service (abbr.)
19 Wish undone
21 French artist
23 Alcoholic drink
24 Roof edge
26 Things done
27 Hall (Ger.)
28 Swathe
29 ___ dixit
30 Grig (2 words)
32 Grope
35 Cavity (auf.)
39 Environmental Protection Agency (abbr.)
41 Ahead
43 Muslim deity
45 Monster
47 Speed-of-sound
48 Fancy
49 Academy (abbr.)
50 Sheep's cry
51 Abate
53 Grain
54 Sayings (suf.)

Visitacion Valley Business Directory

Valley free listings in the 415 area code. Call the Grapevine at (415) 467-9300

AQUARIUM
DRAGON CITY AQUARIUM, 144 Leland Ave., 333-4598
AUTOMOTIVE
BAYSHORE AUTO, 2260 Bayshore Blvd., 467-6130
BAYSHORE SERVICE, 2596 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5239
BROTHERS AUTO BODY, 2520 Bayshore Blvd
CHARLIE'S GARAGE , 2550 Bayshore Blvd., 239-7450
TW AUTOMOTIVE , 2500 Bayshore Blvd., 585-8281
BANK
BANK OF AMERICA, 6 Leland Ave., 622-4501
BAKERS
LITTLE QUIAPO BAKE SHOP, 169 Leland Ave., 239-2253
BARBERS
BARBERSHOP, 3570 San Bruno Ave., 724-4398
DeMASI'S BARBER SHOP, 35 Leland Ave
THE SHOP (JB), 160A Leland Ave., 239-6709
BEAUTICIANS
BODY, SOUL & SPIRIT, 222 Leland Ave., 333-7261
FACE, BODY & SOUL, 3582 San Bruno Ave., 467-3223
HONG KONG HAIR & NAIL BEAUTY SALON, 199 Leland Ave., 333-1005
LUCKY HAIR, 2436 Bayshore Blvd., 586-8288
MAY MAY BEAUTY SALON, 60 Leland Ave., 337-9381
MIZ RENA'S SALON, 19 Blanken Ave., 467-3399
NAILS BY JENNY, 50 Leland Ave., 333-6800
WHO'S BADD, 224 Leland Ave., 657-3155
BLIND CLEANING
SPEEDY ULTRASONIC BLIND CLEANING (commercial and residential), 1116 Girard St., 467-7506
BOARDING HOUSE
ABLE'S CASA, 850 Rutland St., 333-4664, fax 333-4693
BOOKKEEPERS
AMYARAGON, PROFESSIONAL BOOKKEEPER, 467-8927
VERNA WALLACE E.A., 2320 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5333
CARPETS
HANSAN INTERIORS, 41 Leland Ave., 333-6382
CHURCHES
CHURCH OF THE VISITACION, 666 Sunnydale Ave., 239-5950
IGLESIA EL ESPIRITU SANTO, 38 Leland Ave
KOREAN FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 333 Tunnel Ave., 468-1213
RIDGE VIEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 590 Leland Ave., 239-5457
ST JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 240 Leland Ave., 586-6381
VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH, 306 Raymond Ave., 467-6055
VISITACION CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH, 8 Desmond St., 333-4503
COFFEE
CANDLESTICK COFFEE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 467-2442
HAPPY DONUT, 2600 Bayshore Blvd., 469-5309
JOE LELAND CAFE, 28 Leland Ave
CREDIT UNION
NORTHEAST COMMUNITY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, 29 Leland Ave., 434-0738
DAY CARE
CAROUSEL DAY CARE, 261 Hahn St., 469-5353
DENTIST
VISITACION VALLEY DENTAL OFFICE (Aberi Kuan, DDS), 37 Leland Ave., 239-5500
DEVELOPERS
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., 587-7895
ELECTRICAL
TATE ELECTRIC (Joel Tate), 467-4657
FLOORS
TEDDY B's HARDWOOD FLOORS, 309-6342
FLORISTS
IL FIORE FLOWERS, 2466 San Bruno Ave 468-0145
GARDEN ORNAMENTS
SILVESTRI GARDEN ORNAMENTS, 2635 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5990
GROCERS
CASA LOPEZ PRODUCE, 58 Leland Ave., 586-4745
E-Z STOP MARKET, 2203 Geneva Ave., 585-9240
FIVE MILE MARKET, 3574 San Bruno Ave., 467-7300
K.C. MARKET, 400 Wilde St., 467-3024
LA LOMA PRODUCE #2, 65 Leland Ave., 239-7520
LITTLE VILLAGE MARKET, 1450 Sunnydale Ave., 586-1815
M & M SHORTSTOP, 2145 Geneva Ave., 585-0878
PICCOLO PETE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 468-6800
7-11, 2200 Bayshore Blvd., 468-8646
SHUN LEE MARKET, 2400 Bayshore Blvd., 586-4851
SMITTY'S MARKET, 2610 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5506
SUPER FAIR MARKET, 201 Leland Ave., 239-6856
TEDDY'S MARKET, 298 Teddy Ave
HERBS
SAN ON HERBS, 33-A Leland Ave 333-7469
HYPNOTHERAPY
VALERIE HABEGGER-HYPNOTHERAPY, 371 Teddy Ave., 468-5631
INSURANCE
EDIE EPPS (A.H.E. INSURANCE), 467-0236, Fax 467-0276
ROBERT LEHMAN, CLTC (Blue Cross), 333-0850
KITCHEN CABINETS
LEE CHANG INTERNATIONAL, 25 Leland Ave., 333-2730
LAUNDRY/CLEANERS
BAY WASH, 44 Leland Ave
CITY WASH, 83 Leland Ave., 333-9467
COIN WASH & DRY LAUNDRY, 186 Leland Ave
FORTY-NINER CLEANERS , 51 Leland Ave., 239-6418
LELAND AVENUE CLEANERS, 151 Leland Ave., 586-1412
VALLEY LAUNDRY, 90 Leland Ave
VISITACION VALLEY LAUNDRY, 108 Leland Ave., 239-9030
LEARNING
FIRST PLACE 2 START, 1252 Sunnydale Ave., 333-2669
HERITAGE HOMES CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER, 245 Rey St., 586-8700
JOHN KING CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER, 500 Raymond Ave., 333-1375
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY BEACON CENTER, 450 Raymond Ave., 452-4907
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER CHILDRENS PROGRAMS, 103 Tucker Ave., 467-5565
VISITACION VALLEY FAMILY SCHOOL, 325 Leland Ave., 585-9320
LIBRARY
VISITACION VALLEY BRANCH, 45 Leland Ave., 239-5270
MANUFACTURER
SEE'S CANDIES, INC., 345 Schwerin St
MEDICAL
AMERICAN RED CROSS, BAY AREA CHAPTER, 1704 Sunnydale Ave., 584-3620
HAWKINS VILLAGE MEDICAL CLINIC (Dept. of Public Health), 1099 Sunnydale Ave., Appointments: 715-0310
DR. SAM HO, MD, 2858 San Bruno Ave., 337-6135
NEW CARNIVAL ACUPRESSURE HEALTH CENTER, 2458 Bayshore Blvd., 337-8100
NORTHEAST MEDICAL SERVICES, LELAND AVENUE, 82 Leland Ave., 391-9686 (ask for Leland Avenue clinic)
PORTOLA FOOT & ANKLE CLINIC (Dr. Divyang Patel), 2858 San Bruno Ave 467-7500
NOTARY
ROYAL PACIFIC MORTGAGE, 46 Leland Ave., 333-4900
ORGANIZATIONS
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER, 2442 Bayshore Blvd., 587-2689
GENEVA TERRACE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, 60 Burr Ave., 584-2700
GIRLS AFTER SCHOOL ACADEMY, 2060 Sunnydale Ave., 333 Schwerin St., 584-4044
JOHN KING SENIOR COMMUNITY, 500 Raymond Ave., 239-6233
LELAND HOUSE, 141 Leland Ave., 405-2000
ROCK (Real Options for City Kids), 590 Leland Ave., 333-4001
VISITACION VALLEY SENIOR CENTER, 66 Raymond Ave., 467-4499
PHARMACY
VISITACION VALLEY PHARMACY, 100 Leland Ave., 239-5811
PHOTOGRAPHER
WALTER CORBIN PHOTOGRAPHY (freelance), 435 Sawyer St., 587-9471, fax 337-8620
PLUMBING
MARK VOELKER PLUMBING, 99 Arleta Ave., 467-7401
POST OFFICE
VISITACION USPO, 68 Leland Ave., (800) 275-8777
REAL ESTATE
JUSTYNA P. TO, (Realtor, Coldwell Banker), (650) 757-8868, Mobile (415) 830-1235, Fax (650) 246-1910
LaFLUE-WALTON & ASSOCIATES, 2428 Bayshore Blvd., 587-8683
CATHY KUNE SAUNDERS (Zephyr Real Estate), 215 West Portal Ave. 731-5011 ex. 163
RESTAURANTS
BAYSIDE CAFE, 2011 Bayshore Blvd., 467-2023
BLUE HAWAIIAN RESTAURANT, 107 Leland Ave., 469-9728
G & L BAKERY & RESTAURANT, 198 Leland Ave., 239-6283
HERNANDEZ TAQUERIA & BAKERY, 98 Leland Ave., 587-7721
LUAN FAT BAKERY, 110 Leland Ave., 585-1167
TWO JACK'S, 167 Leland Ave., 337-0433
SCULPTOR
CARTORIGINALS (Mikal Cartor), 2 Hahn St., 239-4138
SELF-DEVELOPMENT
DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENTS (Marjorie Ann Williams, CEO, Career and Self-Enhancements Specialist) 467-7608
SERVICE PROVIDERS
THE VILLAGE, 1099 Sunnydale Ave., 239-5045
VISITACION VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH OUTREACH CENTER, 57 Leland Ave
VISITACION VALLEY BILINGUAL EDUCATION, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES & TRAINING (VVBESST), 120 Leland Ave
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER (VVCC), 50 Raymond Ave., 467-6400
VVCC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER, 161 Leland Ave., 586-6998, Fax 586-8027
VISITACION VALLEY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTREACH TO MERCHANTS (VVBOOM), 1099 Sunnydale Ave., 587-7896 ext. 104
TAVERN
THE CLUB HOUSE, 25 Blanken Ave
TELEPHONE
D & A WIRELESS, 78 Leland Ave., 452-4139
VARIETY
GOLDEN 99 CENTS ZONE, 5-7 Leland Ave., 333-3923

State Gas Prices Falling But Still High

According to a new report from AAA of Northern California, which tracks fuel costs as a service to consumers, the statewide average cost for a gallon of regular unleaded gas on Dec. 11 was $3.33. This price is a decrease of six cents per gallon since the last AAA gas price report on Nov. 13, but still 83 cents higher than a year ago.

Some of the decline in gas prices is a result of falling cost for crude oil, the raw material from which gasoline is made. After peaking in November at nearly $99 per barrel, oil prices have dropped by more than 10 percent.

Economic forces like the value of the U.S. dollar and the health of financial markets continue to exert pressure on the price of oil and gas. Since oil prices are set in dollars, nations and corporations that sell the commodity are increasingly concerned about losing money when the dollars they earn from oil sales are converted to other currencies. Economic concerns in the U.S. may be a factor in decreasing demand for gasoline.

"There's been so much volatility in the energy markets that it may be some time before the dust settles and we have clearer picture of where prices are headed." said Sean Comey, spokesperson for AAA of Northern California. "What happens to crude oil prices and the value of the U.S. dollar over the next few weeks will give us some clue about whether the current trend of modest gas price decreases will continue."

The most expensive average gas price in the California communities where AAA monitors fuel costs was in San Francisco, where regular unleaded sold for $3.55 per gallon. The lowest price among Northern California cities tracked by AAA is in Redding and Tracy, where gas cost an average of $3.23 per gallon.

Throughout Northern California, the average price was $3.36, a decrease of 6 cents per gallon since the last AAA gas price report. In the Bay Area, the average price was $3.51, down 2 cents from last month. The statewide average record high price of $3.49 was set on May 9.

The national average price for gas was $3, down 11 cents from last month's survey. The national average price was 33 cents a gallon less than the California statewide average price.

A Saddening Loss To Street Violence

DeWayne Larry recently spoke at a recent Visitacion Valley holiday dinner after having received a certificate for graduating from a pre-employment workshop jointly run by Goodwill and the Visitacion Valley Violence Prevention Collaborative.

DeWayne Larry, a transitional dock employee who lost his life to street violence in the Bayview on Dec. 17 had recently excelled in a Visitacion Valley Beacon workshop.

"He was always on time, sat in the front row and was constantly checking in to make sure he was on the right path," said Laura Burton, who had recently recruited him for an employment program. "We put DeWayne at the top of the hiring list."

Larry was also employed as a security guard.

Visitacion Valley Family and Community Services Center

For a Better, Healthier, Safer Community for All

We Can Help You!

Complete Immigraiton documents, assist with SF County paperwork (Medi-Cal, Welfare, etc.), education workshops, referrals to other services

First Series of
Interacting with Your Child Through Games and Activities
"Blow Painting"
Thursday, January 31
5:30 - 7 p.m.

Free dinner, books and educational games.
Participants with children ages 0-5 encouraged.

First Series of
Parents' Support Group
Thursday, January 10
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Finding Your own Well Being

Free dinner and childcare!
Participants with children ages 0-5 encouraged.
Facilitated by Julia Carmen, *Before The After*

Every Wednesday
January 2, 9 16, 23 and 30
6 - 8 p.m.

Men's Classes
Facilitated by
Before The After
FREE Refreshments

Free Food Distribution
Every Monday,
3 - 4 p.m.
January 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30
Emergency food box
available anytime.
Call (415) 586-6998,
Monday-Friday,
9 a.m.-5p.m.

January 2008 Activities
held at 161 Leland Avenue
except where noted

Enhanced Information and Referral
Every Monday Through Friday
January 1 to 31, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

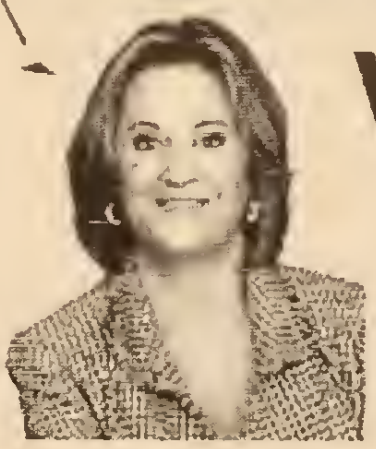
Male Involvement Support Group
Thursday, January 10, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Child Obesity Workshop
Thursday, January 24, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

For more information, please contact the Family and Community Services Center staff: Meriam T. Abalos, Marichelle Punzalan, Joyce Boone, Cynthia Pun, Jenny Sosa and Marianna Chan at
161 Leland Ave., San Francisco, 94134

161 Leland Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134
Tel: (415) 586-6998 Fax: (415) 586-8027 e-mail: meriam_vvcc@sbcglobal.net

I have been studying Visitacion Valley for a long Time.



Cathy Kline Saunders

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